Prophet Mohammadﷺ

A Mercy for the Worlds

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Al-Mahad Al-Aali Al-Islami

Hyderabad, India

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FOREWORD

All praises and eulogy are reserved for Allah, the most Merciful who has created the universe, created the sun and the moon to illuminate it, and decorated it with flowers, plants and trees of fruits of different tastes. He crowned human beings, as the best of His creations in all the realms. To show them the right way, He sent Prophets from time to time who were endowed with the best of knowledge and accomplishments. Most of all, He sent the noblest Prophet Muhammadﷺ for their proper guidance.

Prophet Muhammadﷺ whose days were spent in guiding the straying humanity and whose nights were spent in praying to Allah on behalf of humanity, was the pillar of support for the oppresses and the deprived, orphans and widows. Heﷺ always returned evil with good, cruelty with kindness, violence with peace, enmity with friendship. May Allah send His blessings for himﷺ!

Presently, I would like to introduce briefly the significant speeches delivered by Moulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani in the Guru Nanak Bhavan in April, 10-15 1997, under the auspices of the Centre of Objective Studies, Bangalore. He is a religious scholar of great repute, and the founder member of All India Muslim Personal Law Board and Islamic Fiqh Academy, and was invited to speak on the life and teachings of the Prophetﷺ. At the end of each speech, questions were invited from the audience to which the speaker gave well-argued answers. The esteemed scholar delivered five speeches under different titles.

1. The Prophetﷺ of Islam as light for the entire mankind
2. The Prophetﷺ of Islam and non-Muslims
3. The Prophetﷺ of Islam and women
4. The attitude of the Prophetﷺ of Islam towards the weaker section of society and animal kingdom
5. The Prophetﷺ of Islam and the fundamental human rights

These five topics on which he spoke have been given detailed treatment in the light of the instructions and insights derived from the holy Quran and the traditions of the Prophetﷺ. He also refers to other religions for a

comparative perspective and puts his knowledge and observations in a contemporary context which make the speeches extremely useful for all and provide guidance in the conduct of family and social life. The beauty of his speeches and his eloquence are without any parallel.

These speeches are now reaching the readers in the form of this book. The present series of addresses has been introduced to provide material for the spiritual enlightenment and intellectual awakening of the educated class. One can reasonably expect that such speeches will be of interest to the educated and the elite.

May Allah grant the Moulana a befitting reward and may the speeches reach a wide public and may the organizers of the event be rewarded for their endeavour.

20th April, 1997

Moulana Shah Qadri Syed Refa'i Jilani
Supervisor, Khandwada Qadria Refaiah,
Bangalore, Karnataka

PREFACE

All praise is for the Lord of the worlds, who has guided me to His path and has made me address people on the noble qualities of His beloved and the most admirable Prophetﷺ. The “Bangalore addresses-II” as the title was given to the collection of my addresses at Bangalore, were delivered between Zilhij 2-7, 1417H, corresponding to April 10-15, 1997. These were five addresses on the life of the Prophetﷺ.

For a long time I had the impression that in the books that deal with the Prophet’sﷺ biography, the accounts of battle are given such prominence that those who are not familiar with his great contribution to the culture and civilization of the time might think that his main mission was only that. As a matter of fact after attaining prophethood he lived for 23 years and out of that only seven to eight years were spent in battles. One feels it most intensely when one has to recommend an average book on the Prophet’sﷺ life to a non- Muslim. It will not, perhaps be wrong to assert that although a lot has been written on the Prophet’sﷺ life, one still feels the need of a comprehensive volume on that subject. The writer of such a volume should keep in mind that its readers will be those non- Muslims who are still deprived of the faith and are victims of their own scepticism.

It was not possible to fill this lack through my addresses, but I have tried to highlight the human and humanitarian aspects of hisﷺ character and hisﷺ immense love for Allah’s creation. It was also my endeavour to remove doubts and suspicion from the minds not only of non- Muslims but also of those modern, educated Muslims many of whom are similarly victims of scepticism.

It is clear that this relates not so much to the incidents but the teachings of his life. It embraces every aspect of the faith with which heﷺ had come to the world: the Holy Quran, hisﷺ sayings, activities of hisﷺ daily life, the lives of hisﷺ companions and so on. The deliberations took place in this broad context and at some points the sayings of eminent jurists have also been adduced in support of arguments.

The organizers of the event at Bangalore had recorded my speeches most efficiently in a tape recorder. The recorded speeches were then compared with the original points and addition and alterations were made, and sub-headings were added to make them more accessible and reader-friendly.

These addresses were free from the rhetorical flourishes and eloquence of oratory. I have no great inclination for such a style, nor is it suitable for serious subjects. I had some apprehension as to how the audience would take it, but I felt gratified to see the hall packed with people - men and women who listened to the speeches with rapt attention for two hours for every speech. The questions they asked at the end of the speeches indicated that they had followed my arguments perfectly. Some of them even asked me to have the speeches, particularly those relating to non-Muslims and women, translated into English and other Indian languages. Such honour to the speaker was, besides the interesting subject, due to the excellent arrangements by the organizers.

Besides this, the audience consisted mainly of highly educated gentlemen and ladies and very few from the common public. I must express my thankfulness to many of them who followed my Urdu with difficulty, as they spoke mainly in English. They also wrote down their question in English and strove to follow my answers. This reminded me of the introductory remarks by Moulana Syed Sulaiman Nadvi in his “Madras Addresses” wherein he had asked the audience to excuse him for delivering the addresses in Urdu instead of English. He had drawn the attention of the scholars to the importance of English. It is to be regretted that after a quarter of a century the situation still remains the same.

The question-answer session that followed each address was of great interest to all. Lots of questions were asked. Those that were relevant have been given at the end of respective address.

The time-schedule followed in the programme can serve as an example for religious assemblies. Each address started exactly at 7:30 pm and ended at 9:00 pm, followed by questions and answers that continued till 9:30 pm. The entry was by invitation and many people had got their seats reserved.

There are different ways of religious and intellectual education. One of these important ways is “address”. In it there is a scope of dealing with a subject in a comprehensive perspective. The thought content in it is usually more than that in the common religious discourses that do not have such scope. On the other hand are usually interactive discussions where the participants throw light on different aspects of a topic through debates and discussions. But those not actually present in these can really follow them. Addresses combine the merits of both. The speaker makes a coherent presentation on an important topic in depth, and then different aspects of the topic are illuminated through questions and answers.

There is a glorious tradition of organizing addresses in India, and the southern part of the country takes precedence in this task over the north. The city of Madras is the seat from where Allama Iqbal delivered his addresses that were later published in the form of a book with the title “Reconstruction of Religious Thoughts in Islam”. Syed Sulaiman Nadvi had delivered a series of addresses there on the life of the Prophetﷺ. Moulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi delivered his address on the same topic in the same city. In Bombay, he delivered his famous address on Indo-Arab relations and the Arab shipping industry that were considered the last word on the subject. In recent times, the well-known researcher, Dr. Hamidullah Sahibhas delivered some important addresses on the Islamic world that have been published as the Bhawalpur Addresses.

However, it must be admitted that the success achieved in this genre by Syed Sulaiman Nadvi’s “Madras Addresses” is without any parallel. The topics he had taken up for discussion were unusual, and later speakers could build their arguments on his address on the life and teachings of the Prophetﷺ. His language and style is always impressive. The elegance and fluency of these speeches have remains unsurpassed.

I do not wish to compare my speeches with the famous ones mentioned above. However, as my speeches too, were on the sacred life of the Prophetﷺ, I had great pleasure in delivering them. I find a great pleasure now in seeing them in the printed form. I do realize that in the glorious tradition of the Prophet’s chronicle, my humble work is not of much worth.

However, I feel blessed in the thought that among the chroniclers of the Prophet's ﷺ life and teaching, my humble name too is added, and I, too, can present my humble fare to my beloved Lord.

The travel to Bangalore to deliver the address also afforded me the opportunity to know brothers in Islam and gain new friends. Their great love and affection has left an indelible impression on my mind. My sincerest thanks are due to Janab Zakiullah Sharif (Convenor), Janab Inayatullah, my three namesakes, Ibrahim Sahib and several others whose images are fresh in my mind though their names have slipped from memory. The image of my venerable elders, Hazrat Moulana Mufti Ashraf Ali Sahib, Ameer-e-Shariat, Karnataka, Hazrat Moulana Syed Mustafa Refai (Assistant General Secretary, Milli Council, Karnataka, Janab Danial Qazi Mir Maqsood Ali Khan Sahib (Editor Salaar) are still fresh in my mind and I am beholden to them for their kindness. I am grateful to the newspapers and magazines that published reports of and extracts from the addresses. I pray to Allah for the continuance of these addresses for years to come, and for making "Bangalore Addresses II" a means of his forgiveness and the Prophet's ﷺ mediation for me and the organizers of the address.

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16th Safar, 1418H

Moulana Khalid Saif Ullah Rahmani

بِسۡمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

Prophet Mohammadﷺ was not only the messenger for Muslims. Heﷺ was sent by God as the benefactor and guide for the whole mankind. Hence, Heﷺ is named as "A mercy for the worlds" (رحمت اللعالمین) in the holy Quran but not as "A mercy for only Muslims". It is our negligence that we have not conveyed this fact to our non-Muslim brothers. Thus, there is a misconception that Prophet Mohammadﷺ was a messenger only for Muslims.

When I was invited to address intellectuals and educated people on the message and teachings of Prophet Mohammadﷺ at Bangalore, I preferred addressing them on the aspects which cover the universal and comprehensive purpose of his life. Even non-Muslim brothers attended the addresses. After each address questions were invited from the audience and were answered by me. Non-Muslim brothers took part in this session effectively.

The collection of these addresses was published several times in Urdu. In 2002, its English version was published by Al-Mahad Al-Aali Al-Islami, Hyderabad, as demanded by a large group of people. This book is valuable and was in need of further printing. When the International Seminar on "Seerat-un-Nabiﷺ" (Teachings and the Personality of Prophet Mohammedﷺ), 21-22nd February 2016, was scheduled at Al-Mahad Al Aali Al-Islami, the necessity is felt for publishing its new edition. Some of the friends have taken the responsibility hence a new edition is before the readers.

As usually, references are not quoted during the addresses therefore in the present edition, references are not found. However, it is planned that one more new edition shall be published soon with all the references (انشاءاللہ).

Most importantly, the present edition quotes well-known and authentic sources only.

On this occasion, I would like to thank my sisters in Islam, Mrs. Sameena Subhani (President, MWIF) and Dr. Quddusa Sultana (Professor, E.C.E., Dept., D.C.E.T) for the compilation and editing of the book. Dr. Quddusa had also translated my book on "مسلم پرسنل لا اور بعض غلط فہمیاں" (The Muslim Personal Law and Misunderstandings) in English, which was highly appreciated by intellectuals. I also thank Mrs. Jaleesa Sultana Yaseen (Advocate) for her endeavours in completion of this task. May Allah reward them with the best.

I pray that Allah accept efforts of all of us and through our relation with our Prophet ﷺ may Allah reward us with the success in hereafter (آمین).

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12 Rabbi-us-Sani, 1437H

23rd January, 2016

Moulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani
Founder Chairman,
Al-Mahad Al-Aali Al-Islami, Hyderabad

CHAPTER 1
THE PROPHET OF ISLAM
LIGHT FOR THE ENTIRE MANKIND

First Address

[2, Zillhijja, 1417H, 10th April, 1997]

1.1 INTRODUCTION

When we say that Mohammadﷺ is the ideal for the whole world, this is not simply effusion of faith, but a historical and verifiable reality. The Prophethood of Muhammadﷺ has this strength that it has never allowed Muslims, even at the worst of times, to feel inferior to others, they may be poor and starving, victims of riots, accused of terrorism and fundamentalism. In other words, all kinds of oppression could be heaped on them, but the undying love for the Prophetﷺ cannot be wiped out from their heart. They will be ready to lay down their lives, but will never allow themselves to be deprived of their faith and weaken their particular relationship with the Prophetﷺ. This is our best treasure for this world and incentive for our journey to the Hereafter.

The best introduction for the Prophetﷺ of Islam has come from the words of Allah. The detail and clarity with which Holy Quran introduces its harbinger can rarely be found in the case of any religious leader or prophet. A couple of such verses have just been quoted for you. These verses underline the fact that among all the guides and reformers of the world, heﷺ is the only Prophet who deserves to be the ideal for the whole humanity. Allah has stated that heﷺ is not meant for any group, class religion, race or even a single world, but encompasses the entire creation:

We sent youﷺ not, but as a mercy for all creatures [Ambiya:107].

Allah has further asserted that heﷺ is the model for all groups and all classes for all situations, rich or poor, king or commoner, powerful or powerless, judge or plaintiff, teacher or student, social life or economic

system, internal politics of a country or its external policy, in times of war or peace.

> *You have indeed In the messenger of Allah An excellent exemplar [Ahzab:21].*

The Holy Quran has declared termination of Prophethood with him. It is not merely a declaration of the fact that the cycle of Prophethood has come round, that there will arrive no prophet after him, rather it is a declaration of the fact that his life's teachings will remain intact till doomsday and human accretions and improvisations can never distort the Shariah (Islamic law) brought by himﷺ.

> *Mohammad is not the father of an of your men, but (he is) the messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets [Ahzab:40].*

In the above verse of the Quran, on one hand the merits of the Prophetﷺ have been mentioned, on the other, it is also made clear that only those merits can entitle someone to be the leader of all mankind and its ideal. There is no doubt that it is a vast claim, but it is not based on any religious effusion but on a comparative study of the religious leaders of the world. This claim can never be valid about any other leaders.

1.2 WHO CAN BE THE IDEAL FOR THE WHOLE WORLD?

There are three essential requirements for anyone who wants to be an ideal for the whole world.

a) First, he has not addressed himself to any specific community or class and he has made no distinction between one group and another on the basis of colour, race, territory or language. A person whose sympathy lies only with one community and regards other communities merely as service providers of some kind or other cannot do justice to humanity at large. His life and teachings cannot be a true guide for others.
b) The second important condition is that he should undergo all kinds of experiences like happiness and sorrow, success and failure, kingship and commonness, wealth and poverty;

moreover, he should also have experience of family and social ties, e.g. father, son, husband etc. In other words, his personality should encompass all human relations and social situations.

c) The third condition is that his message and his teachings should reach everyone in their pristine form, unaltered by human distortions.

Now we will try to make a comparative study of the Prophet ﷺ of Islam in the light of the parameters set above. Apart from Islam, there are two other religions – Christianity and Hinduism. Although Buddhism is another religion, considering the large number of its followers, it has lost its original identity. Though it had come as a reaction to Hinduism, and to remove its injustices, the Hindu faith and ideology absorbed it within itself. That is why I shall refer to only Hinduism as the religion of India. Among the revealed religions, Judaism is also an important one. However, the Jews themselves recognize that their religion is a racial one encompassing the community of Isaac i.e., Hazrat Ishaq (PBUH). That is why they have not claimed their religion to be valid for the whole humanity.

1.2.1 Was Jesus Christ for the Whole World?

Christianity also presents the concept of such a religion that was meant only for the children of Isaac i.e., Bani Israel's guidance. Christ i.e., Hazrat Isa (PBUH) has been addressed in the Old Testament as follows:

"O Rabbi, the son of God, You are the king of Israel" [Yaohan A: 49-50]

It is written in the Old Testament, Mathew:

"O king of Jews, Greetings!" [27-29].

Hazrat Isa (PBUH) himself said:

"I have been sent to the lost flocks of Israel, and to no one else. [Mathew: 15/42].

That is why Hazrat Isa (PBUH) clarified to his twelve companions who are called Hawaris:

> *"Do not go outside your community and do not enter the city of Samarians" [Mathew 10: 5-6].*

It is for this reason that the Christian elders believed that the Jews should not mingle with other communities [Aamal, 10:28]. When Hawari Patras went to them uncircumcised and took them with him, his companions found fault with him [Aamal, 11:2]. This indicates that the Christians did not permit even preaching of religion beyond the Judaic race. This is corroborated by the fact that Christ believed that the final salvation was meant only for the people of the Judaic race [Yohanna 4:22]. He was so bound by his principle that when a woman from Canon sought help from him he flatly declined that it was not advisable to throw bread pieces meant for (their) children to dogs [Mathew 15:26].

It is clear that one whose message was meant for a particular community and who had closed the door of salvation on everyone else, cannot be a model for the whole humanity.

1.2.2 The Hindu Religion and the Caste System

The Hindu religion which is supposed to be among the oldest religions of the world is based on the caste system. If racial discrimination is something desirable then there can be no better religion than Hinduism. According to it, human beings are divided into four groups by virtue of their birth: Brahma, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra.

Brahma means God, so the name Brahma itself indicated proximity with God. Brahmans are representatives of religion, and learning the Vedas and accepting offerings from people are their privilege. By virtue of birth, the Brahmans came at the apex of the hierarchy of creations. There are crimes that are punished by death for others. If a Brahman commits that crime, only his head may be shaved off. A ten year old Brahman is regarded as a father by a 100 year old Kshatriya. He can marry women from any caste, but members of no other caste can marry

Brahman women. However, if a Brahman marries Shudra women, he is said to be paving his way to hell. However wicked a Brahman might be, he is still regarded with respect.

The job of a Kshatriya is to make offerings, gifts, and ensure security. A Vaishya is a businessman, a cultivator, a herdsman. In other words, all these castes are service- providers for Brahmans.

The caste that has the saddest fate is the Shudra. A Shudra cannot learn Vedas, cannot sit with a Brahman. His only job is to serve the Brahmans with utmost sincerity. Brahmans can take away his possessions by force. If a Shudra raises his hand against a higher caste, his hands are chopped off. If he kicks anyone in anger, his legs are cut. If a Shudra abuses a Brahman, his tongue is slashed. If a Shudra claims that he can teach a Brahman, he should be made to swallow boiling oil. The expiation for killing a Shudra is the same as killing a dog, cat, frog, lizard, owl or crow. It is clear that a religion that approves of such injustice and social iniquity, and can make such stark distinctions between human beings cannot provide an equitable way of life for all humanity.

1.2.3 Islam is a Universal Religion

Gentlemen, now listen to the thoughts and views of the Prophetﷺ of Islam on this issue. The foremost thing is that heﷺ never presented Islam as specific to a territory or people. Rather heﷺ always gave a universal concept of God who is the Lord of all humanity and Whose blessings are meant for everyone. Heﷺ said about the Quran that it provides guidance to all humanity. About hisﷺ Prophethood Allah declared that it is valid for all mankind, and that the Prophetﷺ is a blessing for the whole universe. The Quran says:

We sent you not but As a mercy for all creatures [Ambiya:107].

1.2.3.1 Basis for Merit is Acquisition, not the incident of Birth

In the history of mankind, people have often regarded accident of birth as the proof for merit. Iranians believed that God's blood runs through the veins of the king and his family. Hindus believe that the Brahmins

are superior by birth and they are born from god's head. Jews and Christians believe that they are God's chosen people.

Our Prophetﷺ gave the concept that the basis for superiority is acquisition of excellence and not the coincidence of birth. Being a black or a white, being born in a particular family or a territory cannot be the basis for anyone's excellence. The real basis for excellence is a person's character and conduct. It is on the basis of character and conduct that a human being can attain proximity to God. The Prophetﷺ declared during his historic address on the occasion of Hajjat-ul-Vidah (Final Haj before departing):

> *"Oh mankind, be aware that all of you have one God. The Arabs are not superior to non-Arabs, and non-Arabs are not superior to the Arabs. Similarly, the whites are not superior, nor the blacks. One can be superior to the other only on the basis of his conduct. The best among you is he who fears God the most. Have I made known the religion of God to you? The people said- "Yes, Prophetﷺ of God". Heﷺ said- "Let those who are present here take this message to those who are not here."*

On the occasion of victory over Makkah, heﷺ also gave an expression to his revolutionary thought:

> *"Thanks to God that He has saved you from the ignorance of the dark ages. Oh my people, human beings are of two kinds: the virtuous and gentle who is dear to God, and the wicked and deprived who have no worth before God. All human beings are the children of Adam, and God has created Adam from clay."*

As a matter of fact, through these brief statements, heﷺ has pulled down all the barriers that were used to denigrate and insult human beings down the ages, by obliterating the distinction between the Arabs and non-Arabs. Heﷺ has negated territorial distinction between human beings. Similarly heﷺ struck at the very roots of racial and linguistic distinctions. Heﷺ also attacked any discrimination on the basis of

complexion by declaring that there is no difference between the blacks and the whites.

1.2.3.2 Religious Equality

The Prophetﷺ did not simply preach equality but practiced it in everyday life. Heﷺ never stipulated that the religious hierarchy would be constituted by people of any particular race, and that religious education is the special preserve of any particular community whose opinions should be regarded as definitive in religious affairs. Heﷺ asserted that the right to lead prayer belongs to one who is of the best character, remembers the Quran well, and can read it flawlessly, and who is familiar with the do's and don'ts of the prayer and leads a restrained life.

1.2.3.3 Contribution of Non-Arabs in the Service of Islam

The Prophetﷺ did not make any distinction between men in the learning and teaching of the Quran and the Hadith. That is why among the Prophet's companions (Sahaba) there were many great scholars who were neither Quraish nor Arab. And, after one century of Islam, when the material on Islamic learning and teaching was compiled and organized, there were many famous scholars known throughout the Muslim world who were non-Arabs. The greatest scholar of fiqh (jurisprudence), Imam Abu Hanifa and the greatest scholar of Hidith, Muhammad bin Ismail Bukhari were both of Persian descent. Hasan Basri, the great mystic, was a non-Arab. It was the result of the forward-looking teachings of the Prophetﷺ that despite periods of decadence and decline, Brahmanism could never creep into Islam. And non-Arabs adorned many honourable positions of religious scholars, judges etc.

1.2.3.4 Political Equality

In the political life also, the Prophetﷺ of Islam made no distinctions of race or colour. This is corroborated by hisﷺ statement:

"If a flat-nosed Negro is made your Ameer (leader), then obey him".

During his absence from Madinah heﷺ appointed Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Umme Maktoom as the governor several times. Abdullah was a slave, the lowest of the low in the Arab social hierarchy. Heﷺ appointed Hazrat Zaid bin Harisa (R.A.) and his son Osama bin Zaid (R.A.) as commanders of the army where the leaders of Quraish fought as ordinary soldiers. Iran was vanquished by Salman Farsi (R.A.) who was a non-Arab. Hazrat Omar (R.A.) had said that if the slave freed by Huzaifa (R.A.) were alive and well, he would have appointed as his successor. This is the reason why after the Abbasids, the Caliphate was always held by non- Arabs and neo- Muslims. If the dynastic rule was encouraged in Islam, then after the Prophetﷺ, Hazrat Ali (R.A.) would have been made the Caliph and not Hazrat Abu Bakr or Hazrat Omar because no one could be more deserving of it than the Prophet'sﷺ immediate family.

However, it was a fact that the Arabs had regarded themselves as racially superior to others. The Prophetﷺ knew that the Quraysh were not ready to accept others as rulers, so to pacify them temporarily heﷺ had declared that the leader of Muslims would be chosen from the Quraysh tribe. Perhaps, heﷺ did not mean that the leader cannot be chosen from any other tribe or place. Otherwise heﷺ would not have exhorted Muslims to obey the leader even if he happened to be a black slave.

1.2.3.5 Equality before the Law

The Prophetﷺ declared everyone to be equal before the law. The same act could not be permissible to the Jews if it is not permissible to others; the act that was punished by death for others was only punished by head-shaving for the Brahmans. An Arab woman was accused of stealing and the Prophetﷺ sentenced that her hand should be chopped off. People appealed to himﷺ through his favourite companion, Hazrat Osama, to dilute the punishment. But heﷺ was irritated by this appeal and said:

"If it was Bibi Fatima (daughter of Muhammadﷺ) in place of this woman, her hand also would have been chopped off. The earlier communities brought about their ruin by punishing the weak and letting off the more powerful in society".

In Islam, the law makes no distinction between the lord and the serf, small or big. All are equal in the eye of law. During Hazrat Omar's (R.A.) caliphate, Abi bin Kab was the Qazi. There was a case against the caliph. Hazrat Abi stood up to show respect to the caliph. Hazrat Omar said: "This is your first error." According to the Islamic law if the complainant could not provide proof in support of his claim, the judge should have taken an oath from Hazrat Omar (R.A). But Hazrat Abi (R.A.) requested the complainant to excuse the caliph from taking an oath. Hazrat Omar did not like this remission and said to Hazrat Abi: "This is your second error."

During his tenure as caliph, Hazrat Ali filed a suit against a Jew in the court of Qazi Shuraih and presented his son Hazrat Hasan (Prophet's grandson) and his slave Qumbra as witnesses. Qazi Shuraih rejected the evidence on the plea that a son cannot serve as witness in a case against his father, and a slave cannot serve as a witness in a case against his master. Hazrat Ali (R.A.) also alluded to Hazrat Hasan's praises by the Prophetﷺ in this regard. But Qazi Shuraih still refused to accept the evidence as valid. This incident inspired the Jew to embrace Islam.

The contemporary age is supposed to be the age of democracy and secularism. But don't the systems make distinction between the rulers and the ruled? Can the rulers of the country be tried in open courts?

1.2.3.6 Social Equality

Islam has enshrined the principle of social equality and did not encourage caste system, although jurists / social thinkers have encouraged within the Arabs, and the non-Arabs, thinking of the differences in customs and values that characterized these two broad groups of people. But this was like making a virtue of a necessity. This is not in the nature of Islam. According to the Islamic views, family

lineages and tribal nomenclatures are merely markers of identity and not the bases for pride and superiority. It is said in the Quran:

> *The believers, men and women are protected, one of another [Tauba:71].*

Racial and family pride was endemic in the Arabs. Not only ordinary assemblies and fairs that exhibited family and tribal pride, even the occasion of Haj was not free from it. The Prophetﷺ made these assemblies, occasions to sing the praise of God rather than family and tribal vanity. The Prophetﷺ was not content to declare social equality as an idea, but practiced it in real life. Heﷺ got his cousin sister Hazrat Zainab, married to Hazrat Zaid bin Harisa (R.A) though Hazrat Zainab's family was not happy with the alliance, as Hazrat Zaid was a non-Arab and had been a slave. This fact finally led to the end of the marriage. But the Prophetﷺ had made his point obvious about social equality through this marriage.

Similarly, heﷺ got Hazrat Osama bin Zaid (R.A) married to Hazrat Fatima bint Qais, and Hazrat Miqdad bin Aswad to Hazrat Zabah bint Zuhair bin Abdul Mutallib. About the second marriage, heﷺ said that the base were character and conduct. Hazrat Bilal (R.A), had sent a proposal for marriage in an Asian family who refused him as he was a freed slave. The Prophetﷺ was angry and instructed that the proposal should be accepted. Hazrat Abu Hind who was a freed slave sent a proposal of marriage to Banu Biaza and the Prophetﷺ instructed that the proposal should be accepted.

The Prophet'sﷺ companions also understood his commitment to this principle and practiced it in their lives. Hazrat Abu Huzaifa (R.A) got his niece married to a slave, Salim. Hazrat Abdullah bin Masood (R.A) exhorted his sister to marry any Muslim white or black. Hazrat Abdur Rahman bin Auf (R.A) got his sister married to Hazrat Bilal (R.A). Scores of such examples can be found that indicate that even in matters of marriage the Islamic law (Shariah) does not like an over-emphasis on

amily status or social hierarchy. It encourages the principle of brotherhood among all Muslims.

1.2.3.7 Actions Carry Weight, not the Family Lineage

In religion, distinctions on the basis of caste and lineage get legitimacy when one group is preferred in earning reward and another group is deprived of God's blessings and final salvation. In the Hindu religion, proximity of the Brahmans to god is a common concept. In the religions of Christians and Jews it was declared in clear terms that the Jews are preferred by god. The Prophetﷺ knocked the bottom out of such concepts and declared that on the Day of Judgment Allah will not ask anyone about lineage, but about one's actions. The Prophetﷺ had said this to his daughter, Hazrat Fatima (R.A) and his aunt, Hazrat Safiya that on that day it would be of no use to them to be the daughter and the aunt of the Prophetﷺ.

One tradition species that one day Abu Lahab (Uncle of the Prophetﷺ) had asked the Prophetﷺ:

> *"What will I get if I accept your religion?" The Prophetﷺ replied: "You will get whatever other converts have got." Abu Lahab said: "Shall I have no privilege for being the uncle of the Prophetﷺ?" The Prophetﷺ asked: "What do you want after all?" Abu Lahab retorted, "To hell with such a religion where I and others are treated on par".*

The Quran has made it clear that on the Day of Judgment, one's children or relatives cannot come to one's help.

> *Of no profit to you will be your relatives and your children on the Day of Judgment [Mumtahina:3].*

Lack of distinction of race, caste, etc., in the matters of reward and punishment on the Judgment Day has played a vital role in removing the concept of social hierarchy and sectarian beliefs.

1.3 NECESSARY CLARIFICATION

It can be said that among all the current religions of the world, only Islam and its Prophetﷺ have universal validity. Only Islam has regarded

humanity as a unit and has negated all distinctions of blood-relations. I must clarify here that whatever I have said about the Prophets of the children of Israel and Hindu religion, offers only a contemporary perspective. I am sure that no true Prophet can even preach sectarianism or support racial distinction. It must all be human accretions that crept into the religions, because of the machinations of human beings who wanted to exploit their fellow human beings.

1.3.1 Lack of Exemplars in Hindu religion

Only a person, whose life has encompassed all areas of human experience, can be a model for the whole humanity. Judged on this touchstone, no other Prophets can qualify for the above except Muhammadﷺ. The Hindus do not even have any concept of Prophethood. Rather they have the concept that the Creator of the world appears on the earth from time to time to remove chaos or sin. Such beings are called avatars or incarnations of God.

The two great personalities of Hindu religion: Rama and Krishna have been regarded as avatars. It is obvious that a person can be a model for human beings only when he has all the human attributes, urges and desires, and not like God who has supernatural powers like lifting the mountain in one's palm or bringing the dead back to life and vice versa, can make rivers flow, can transform dense forests into deserts, can replace a human head with that of an elephant etc. Even if such avatars were born who were invested with such extraordinary powers, how can they serve as a model for the human being who is weak, helpless and fragile?

1.3.2 The Life of Christ – not a Guide to all Aspects of Life

Our Christian brothers were not content with Christ's status as a Prophet but made him a partner in Godhood. How can a God be example to human beings? Then if one compiles the events of his life from the Bible, they hardly cover even two months of his life. This is also a fact that he did not personally go through vital human experiences.

One enters many relationships through marriage. Through marriage, a man becomes a husband, a father, head of a family. Christ did not marry or raise a family. That is why one cannot find instructions about family and conjugal life in his teachings. Nor was he successful in establishing a kingdom. Rather he was crucified, according to their faith, in a helpless state. That is why, if anyone expects him to provide a model for kingship, a legal system or international relations, he will be disappointed. Nor will he find a criminal justice system whereby peace can be maintained in a country. Christ also could not struggle against his enemies. And probably it was against his temperament. Thus to look for the laws of war and peace in his life is also useless. More or less the same circumstances can be found in the life of Hazrat Moosa (PBUH). He (PBUH) had to live a greater part of his life in desolate deserts because of the wickedness and perversity of the children of Israel. That is why his life is lacking in human experiences. The life of Buddha also suffers from such lack.

1.3.3 Universality of Prophet Muhammadﷺ

Gentlemen, if you look at the Prophet'sﷺ life from this perspective, you will find no such lack.

> *Once the Jews had asked Hazrat Salman Farsi mockingly, "Does your Prophetﷺ even describe rules for ablutions?" Salman Farsi was unfazed by this and replied, "Of course, he has taught us even the rules of ablution (for hygiene) and this is a measure of his greatness".*

Every aspect of the human life has been touched by himﷺ and clear-cut guidance is given for eating, drinking, sleeping, etiquettes of assembling, dialogue, public relations, etc. In totality hisﷺ life can be a model for all situations. Take up any column of Hadith and just look at the table of contents which will give you a fair idea of how different corners of the human life have been illuminated by hisﷺ teachings.

As for social relationship, his lifeﷺ provides a perfect model. Though heﷺ lost his parents in childhood, heﷺ had the same relationship with

his uncles: Abu Talib, Hazrat Hamza and Hazrat Abbas, as one has with one's parents.

Heﷺ had wives from different tribes, but heﷺ had been a kind and affectionate husband to them all. Heﷺ understood the delicate and graceful nature of women and shared with his wives the vicissitudes of his life, its happiness and sorrows, its ups and downs.

The great affection with which heﷺ brought up hisﷺ daughters, educated them and inculcated values in them, provides guidance to everyone. Heﷺ kept the best of relationships with friends and treated his relatives with utmost affection and kindness. Heﷺ not only advised others to look after their relatives but did it in his practical life. Heﷺ gave much more importance to the foster relationship (Relationship with the family of his wet nurse) than people normally gave to relationships of blood. Thus, through his life, heﷺ provided examples for all kinds of social relationships.

1.4 THE SCOPE OF MOHAMMAD'S ﷺ TEACHINGS

The depth of his learning can be gauged from the fact that these important branches of learning in Islam - Kalam, Tasauuf and Fiqh – get their sustenance from his life's teachings.

- Kalam means Islamic Theology or system of belief. In other words, those things that our hearts and mind believe in, such as Tawheed (oneness of God), Prophethood, Day of Judgment, Fate, Angels, Heaven and Hell and so on.
- Tasauuf relates to those rules of conduct that help human beings to purify their hearts and reform themselves, for example, telling the truth and avoiding telling lies, keeping oneself free from vanity and pride, and cultivating values of humanity and fraternity among all human beings, saving oneself from moral lapses. This is the soul of Tasauuf.
- Fiqh (jurisprudence) guides us in legal matters in our practical life. There are five aspects of Fiqh as explained in the next section

1.4.1 Five aspects of Fiqh

a) First, those actions that pertain to the relationship between men and Allah, like Prayer (Salah), Fasting (Sowm), Haj, Charity (Zakah), animal sacrifice (Qurbani) and so on.

b) Second, those rules that pertain to the man's social life and the rights and duties related to it; for example, marriage and divorce, the rights of husband, wife, father, mother, brother, sisters, relatives etc.

c) Third, those rules that relate to the relationship between one citizen and another. For example, buying and selling, rights of traders and customers, employers and employees, owners and tenants, etc.

d) Fourth, those rules that pertain to the relationship between the government and the people, the rulers and the ruled. For example, choosing the Ameer (leader), legal system, rights of the rulers and the subjects, etc. Another set of laws under this head pertains to rules of crime and punishment. In the specific terminology of the jurists, it is called "Uqoobat."

e) Fifth, those laws that govern international affairs between two countries, contracts, pacts of war and peace etc. These are called "Sair" in the specific terminology.

All these rules that illustrate and govern man's relationship with Allah, his relationship with his fellow beings and the relationship between countries, emanate from the Prophet's ﷺ life and teachings. This gives us a clue to the universal validity of the Prophet's ﷺ life and teachings that encompassed all areas of human life.

1.5 THE RESOURCES OF HINDU RELIGION ARE HISTORICALLY UNRELIABLE

The third aspect that is necessary for any personality to serve as a model for humanity is that his life's teachings and the world-view should reach us undistorted so that we can adopt them without any doubt. If we

compare the life of the Prophet ﷺ with the lives of other religious leaders from this perspective, there can be no doubt that there is no one like him ﷺ where teachings have reached us in an undistorted, pure form. If we talk about our Hindu brothers, the most authentic of their religious texts are the Vedas which are normally considered to be divine texts. There are many Vedas, but the Hindus consider four of them to be authentic: Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sam Veda and Atharva Veda. According to Pandit Dayanand Saraswati, these Vedas were revealed to Agni, Vayu, Athya and Augra. But there are major differences among Hindu scholars about these texts, about the number of verses; about the authenticity of some verses as divine; and about the personalities on whom they were revealed. Then these personalities whose names are mentioned cannot be historically verified.

1.6 LACK OF EVIDENCE AND DOCUMENT IN THE ANCIENT ERA FOR BIBLIC TEXT

The Jews and the Christians have their religious texts. The Bible which is in two parts: the Ancient part and the Modern part.

1.6.1 Ancient Compilations

The ancient part contains accounts of Prophets and the divine messages that pertained to the era before the coming of Christ. It mostly contains accounts of the children of Israel. This part also contains the Torah and the Psalms of David which are mentioned in the Quran. But these texts have doubtful authenticity.

History is witness to the fact that (this is admitted by the Jews and the Christians) that these texts have been destroyed again and again. The Torah itself says that Moses had made twelve copies of this brief text and distributed them among different tribes. The Bani Lavi volume for sure, was kept in Tobatoo-e-Sakina (Coffin of peace). In other words this was the original text. However, in 721 B.C. the Osyrian king Sargon had pillaged the Jewish kingdom. The palace of Solomon (PBUH) was destroyed and the sacred text was put to flames. After this, Bakht Nasar mounted attacks on Jews in 598 B.C. and 587 B.C. and

destroyed their habitats, temples and the remaining religious relics. There was genocide of the Jews and thousands of them were made slaves and prisoners. In 539 B.C. fate smiled on the Jews once again. The Iranian emperor, Khusro, allowed them to build their temple. After 181 years, Uzra Kahan compiled this text once again from his memory.

There is no proof of any tradition of memorizing the Torah or recording of it by people when it was being revealed. The Ulema of the Jews themselves never claimed this. It is clear that Uzra Kahan had not compiled the book from definitive or verifiable sources. Rather, it must have been based on fancy and hearsay. That is why different groups of Jews and Christians have major differences about the authenticity of different versions. How can such a text be regarded as genuinely reproducing the life and teachings of the Prophets of the children of Israel?

1.6.2 Modern Compilations

The modern compilations of the Bible are even more doubtful. It is known that Christ (PBUH) always lived a life of oppression and poverty. After his Prophethood he (PBUH) lived only for 3 years, and his followers were few in number. In his own life one finds no mention of putting down the revelations in the form of a compilation. The books attributed to him were more than 50 in number. But without any valid reason, four of them were considered reliable. These four books are: Mathew, Marqas, Luka and Yohana. About Mathew and Yohana, it is said that they were among the Hawaris, but in these books Mathew and Yohana have been mentioned in such a way that it indicates these books were compiled by their disciples. The book of Marqas has been attributed to Marqas who is said to be the disciple of Christ's Hawari, Petra's. In other words he was a "Tabae" (follower of the disciple), and according to some Bible commentators, this book had been compiled after 66 years of Christ's crucifixion. Luka is the disciple of St. Paul, the same St. Paul who is regarded as the first heretic of Christianity. Further, these books differ from one another so much in recording the

same incident, which is a proof of human additions and alterations in them.

1.6.3 Internal Evidences in the Bible

We have so far seen the religious texts in their religious perspective. There are internal evidences in these books that make one doubt their authenticity. In the Ancient part of the Bible, it is narrated that:

- Hazrat Noah (PBUH), after being drunk, went naked in public
- Hazrat Lut (PBUH) had sex with his daughters
- Hazrat Dawood (PBUH) had relations with a soldier’s wife and had got the soldier killed in a battle through a trick
- Hazrat Haroon (PBUH) followed polytheism

Such aspersions against Prophets make one tremble with fear. Can a truly divine book have such obnoxious fabrications? The Bible describes the families of Prophets in a similar vein. It says that Reuben, Hazrat Yaqoob’s son, and Yehuda (who is said to have founded the Jewish community) had sex with the wives of their sons. God is presented in such a way that sometimes He appears to be Almighty and vengeful, but at other times He appears to be so helpless and weak that He regrets having created human beings. He goes to the battlefield and gets defeated. Once, He fights with Hazrat Yaqoob all night long and returns exhausted and defeated.

The modern part of the Bible is attributed to Christ and some of his Hawaris. The text, on the one hand, records the humility and kindness of Christ; on the other hand, it records accounts of his harshness and vituperative abuses that do not behave a Prophet. For example, he addressed the Jew jurists and Pharisees as “snakes”, “children of snakes”, “children of python” and so on. To address human beings as “fools’, “blind fellows”, “denizens of hell”; and to address those who do not understand spirituality as “dogs”, “pigs”, and to characterize those who demanded miracles as “only adulterers wanting to see miracles” are not appropriate for a Prophet. Even a decent human being will not utter such abuses. Thus, even if historical evidence against the Bible did not

exist, these textual materials would have been proof enough for its unreliability, distortion and human intervention. It is clear that we cannot accept the teachings that have reached us through such unreliable sources and adopt them as means of our guidance.

1.7 HISTORICAL PRESERVATION OF THE QURAN, HADITH AND THE PROPHET'S BIOGRAPHY

When we look at the Prophet's ﷺ life from this perspective, we find that there were extraordinary ways and means through which events of his life and his teachings were preserved. This by itself is a miracle. If one reflects just on this aspect with an open mind, he will reach the conclusion that only the Prophet ﷺ of Islam can provide succour to humanity, providing it peace and contentment.

1.7.1 The Holy Quran: The First Source of Islamic Teachings

There are three sources for the life and teachings of the Prophet: the Holy Quran, Hadith and the biography of the Prophet ﷺ.

The Quran is the last and complete divine book for the guidance of humanity. Allah has taken the responsibility of its preservation. Like other religious texts, it cannot be said about it that it was compiled and written a long time after the Prophet's ﷺ death.

The Quran was compiled in the Prophet's ﷺ lifetime. He ﷺ himself compiled it. Hundreds of people committed it to memory during his lifetime and many of his companions collected it in the written form. The people who used to write it down from the mouth of the Prophet ﷺ were many; the permanent scribes were at least 21 in number. They were also those who had always been around the Prophet ﷺ to record the divine verses. Verses relating to different themes were revealed at one time. The Prophet ﷺ would call the relevant scribe to record it. Then he ﷺ was himself a Hafiz (the one who memorises the Quran) and used to refresh it every year with Angel Gabriel (PBUH). The Taravih Salah (especial prayers of Ramadhan) is reminiscent of this. The year he ﷺ, passed away, he ﷺ went over the Quranic text twice. There were many

Huffaz (Those who memorise The Quran) among his companions; among them 23 were well-known, for instance, the four Caliphs, the wives of the Prophetﷺ such as Hazrat Ayesha (R.A), Hazrat Hafsa, Hazrat Umme Salma, Hazrat Umme Warqa. There were many more whose names are not well-known. In the Prophet'sﷺ lifetime, in an incident at Barmauna, 70 Huffaz had achieved martyrdom. One also comes across instances of their martyrdom in the battle during the Caliphate of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (R.A). In some traditions they are said to be 70, while in some other tradition, the number is said to be 700.

There is also such evidence in the Traditions that many written copies of the Quran were available with the Companions. The account of Hazrat Fatima bint Khattab, sister of Umar (R.A) reading the Quran in the printed form and that of Hazrat Umar (R.A) getting it printed is also well-known. The Traditions discouraged the carrying of the Holy Quran on travel for fear that if it fell in the hands of the enemies they might dishonour it. Tibrani (a collection of Hadith) records it that reading the Quran in the form of text is two thousand times better than reading it from memory. These accounts make it clear that the Companions had many copies of the Holy Book. During Hazrat Abu Bakr's (R.A) caliphate, it was considered appropriate to compile the Quran officially, as there could have been differences among individual copies; that is why all manuscripts held by different individuals were invited and it was organized according to the order in which it was arranged during the lifetime of the Prophetﷺ and was kept in safe custody with the government.

After the caliphate of Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.A) this copy was passed to Hazrat Umar Faruq (R.A), the second caliph. As his successor could not be selected in his lifetime, Hazrat Umar (R.A) handed over the copy of the Quran to his daughter Hazrat Hafsa (R.A). Then during his caliphate, Hazrat Usman (R.A) compared this version of the text with other versions that were with many Companions of the Prophetﷺ and

edited it in consonance with the standard linguistic tradition of the Quranic tribe.

Today, the Quran is the only protected Book of the world, without the slightest variation anywhere. There is no difference between the version of the Usman period and the modern version. Allah has protected it and its meanings not only through its words but also through the commentaries of scholars and jurists. The linguistic purity of the Quran is maintained through the art of recitation. Its script has been protected down the ages, and it is still written in the same way as it had been written in the period of Hazrat Usman (R.A). The only exception is that diacritical marks were introduced later to facilitate its reading by the non-Arab readers. Allah has also protected the Arabic language through the Quran unlike many other languages that have disappeared from the face of the earth in the last fifteen hundred odd years.

In the last couple of centuries, Arabic language has got alienated from science and technology. Before the exploration of petrol, it faced extinction because of the extreme poverty of the Arab people. But the Quran not only kept the Arabic language alive, but promoted literature in its style.

Within the period of a hundred or two hundred years, such enormous changes take place in languages that it becomes impossible to understand them. Urdu is a new language and quite a young one. But the new generation finds it difficult to understand. For instance, Dakhni, poems of Mirza Ghalib and Allama Iqbal, even the prose writings of Moulana Abul Kalam Azad. But the Quran was revealed about fifteen hundred years ago, and yet its style is still considered to be the model for literature, as it was considered at the time of its first appearance.

To sum up, Allah has not only protected the Book, He has protected its meaning and the style of its reading as well. He has protected the language in which the Quran was revealed, the style in which it was revealed and the script in which it was originally written down. It is a fact that a substantial part of the Prophet's ﷺ biography is present in the

Quran. His qualities; the nature of his relationship with Allah and His creation; different incidents that occurred at different stages of his life; his relationship with his friends and enemies, and their relationship with him; the tenor of his conjugal life; so on and so forth. In other words there is so much information about the Prophet's ﷺ life in the Quran, that, had there been no other source of information about his life, it would have sufficed it in some way.

1.7.2 Hadith: The Collection of the Prophet's Traditions

The second source the Prophet's ﷺ Biography is Hadith or traditions. The Prophetic traditions encompass the whole of his life and teachings. There protection had also been thought of in the Prophet's ﷺ lifetime. The companions were in the habit of recounting the traditions to each other. They were also being written down. There were many Companions like Hazrat Ali, Hazrat Umar bin Aas, Hazrat Jabir bin Samra, Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas, Hazrat Jabir bin Abdullah (R.A) who had made their own compilation of the traditions. There were many versions that the Prophet ﷺ himself had got written down. Among the titles "Kitabul Sadaqat" (The book of virtues) has been most notable. To determine the authenticity of traditions, scholars have advised a unique way that is known as "Fann-e-Asma-ur-Rijal" (Science or the subject of the personalities through whom the information is passed on) under which the biographical circumstances of the narrators of traditions are discussed. If it is proved that the narrator has told a lie even once in his lifetime, or kept relationship with those that made no distinction between truth and falsehood, then his statements are not taken as genuine. The scholars of traditions were so circumspect in this that the sons did not conceal the inadequacy of fathers and the disciples did not hide the inadequacy of their mentors. Some oriental scholars were surprised by this and opined that in the pursuit of preserving the life of their Prophet ﷺ, the Muslims have effectively preserved the circumstances of life of at least one hundred thousand individuals, which is a unique event in the human history.

There are many evidences to prove that the traditions are authentic and reliable. However, this is not the occasion for that. Nevertheless, two incidents have come to light in the modern period that provides proof that the traditions have reached us in an unaltered form. One of these is the “Prophetic Writings”. Different pieces of writings have been discovered that, according to the experts of symbols, allude to him. There is no difference in the arrangement of words, in these writings and those in the traditions. In traditions, the Prophetic seal shows the following arrangement of the words; ‘Allah’ on the top, then ‘Rasool’ and ‘Muhammad’ at the bottom. The same arrangement can be seen in the writings too.

The second incident pertains to Hamman (R.A), the disciple of Hazrat Abu Huraira who had compiled 138 traditions of the Prophetﷺ. This manuscript has been discovered. These traditions narrated by Hamman have also been recovered by Imam Ahmad (R.A) in his Masnad. It is surprising that the wordings in the manuscript and the Ahmad’s Masnad are exactly the same. It is like a miracle.

1.7.3 Biography: The Third Source of the Prophet’s Teachings

The third source of the Prophet’sﷺ life is his biography and the incidents that have been recorded carefully. Scholars have arranged the incidents of his life according to themes of subjects. For example, the traditions related to Faith (Iman), traditions related to prayer (Salah), and so on and so forth. In the study of traditions, chronology is not considered to be as important as themes. Ibn-e-Shehbab Zehri is credited with compiling his complete biography for the first time. He was born in 50 H. He made expensive documentation by meeting Prophet’s Companions at their homes and questioning even Purdah-observing women. He also benefited from the experts in the field like Urwa bin Zubair (94H), Imam Shu’bi (109H), Wahab Ibn Munbah (114H), and Asim bin Umar Qattadah Ansari (121H).

Imam Zehri was the Imam of both traditions and Prophetic Biography (Sirat). In Traditions, he was succeeded by Imam Malik and Sufian bin

Aimiya (R.A), and in Biography, his successors were Muhammad bin Ishaq and Moosa bin Uqba. Sirat-e Hisham which was printed and is now available, is a proof of Muhammad bin Ishaq's brilliance. Moosa bin Uqba's work on the Prophet's life is also available in different books on the life of the Prophetﷺ. In short, the greater part of his sacred life that is recorded in the Quran and the Traditions had been well-preserved even in his lifetime. Barely a century passed after his death, when several books came on the scene. Gradually, it became a sacred branch of knowledge in itself, so that there will hardly be a Muslim scholar worth the name who has not tried his hand on this theme.

If we make a comparative study of the way Muslims have preserved accounts of the life and teachings of the Prophetﷺ, and those of the Prophets of other religions, we will find that the kind of evidence available for even the weakest tradition will not be found in the case of fundamentals articles of faith in other religions.

1.8 THE PROOF OF THE PERMANENCE OF THE PROPHETHOOD OF MUHAMMADﷺ

There is a proof of the end of Prophethood and the permanence of Islam. It is the law of nature that if something is not useful, it dies out automatically. The tiger is the most powerful animal that can look after itself. But now special efforts are being made to save it from extinction. A lot of money is spent for its protection; special laws have also been made to this effect. If such efforts were made for the protection of Muslims in India, then no communal riots would have occurred. But despite such efforts, the number of tigers is declining day by day. As opposed to this, we find that goats are eaten in huge numbers, yet they are increasing because they are useful to human beings. In short, it is the law of nature that whatever is useful survives and whatever has lost its usefulness dies away.

The preservation of the sacred life of the Prophetﷺ by Allah is evidence of the fact that his life and teachings are beneficial to mankind and they will survive till the doomsday. The religions and the Prophets who came

before him were not relevant after the emergence of Muhammadﷺ otherwise Allah would have preserved them in their pure form.

Thus, when we say that the Prophetﷺ is the model for all humanity, it is not simply excess of enthusiasm on our part but a historical reality. The Prophet Muhammadﷺ provided Muslims with such strength and confidence that despite the misfortunes and enormous difficulties that fell on them from time to time, they never suffered from any inferiority complex, nor did their love for the Prophetﷺ reduce an iota from their heart. They will readily lay down their lives, but will not be ready to part with their faith and the love of the Prophetﷺ. This is our most valuable and prized treasure in this life and reward for the Hereafter.

1.9 QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1.9.1 Were the teachings of earlier Prophets useless?

Q. You have compared the teachings of Prophet Muhammadﷺ with those of other Prophets and claimed that his teachings were perfect. This suggests that the teachings of other Prophets were imperfect, even though every Prophet is supposed to be a guide for his age.

A. We must remember two things here: when we compare our Prophet'sﷺ life with those of other Prophets we in fact compare the Prophet's meticulously recorded biographical events with the "unpreserved" accounts of lives of other Prophets. Because of human distortions, additions and alterations, the earlier religious texts and records do not represent these noble personalities in their real form. We don't suggest that there was any inadequacy in those Prophets; we only criticize those who have distorted their teachings. There is no doubt that each Prophet's life is a perfect guide to his people. We have to have faith on all the Prophets and have regard for all of them, which is a requirement of our faith.

The second thing is that the Pre-Muhammadﷺ age was the childhood of human civilization. During hisﷺ Prophethood, human civilization reached its apex when the whole of humanity became one. In the last

fifteen hundred years human beings have made such advances in sciences and exploration and unravelling the secrets of nature, that in the entire period of human history before Muhammadﷺ, even one tenth of it had not been achieved. Thus, the teachings of earlier Prophets were adequate for their periods, but inadequate for the current requirements of humanity. The following verse from the Quran probably refers to this:

> *This day have I Perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, And have chosen for you Islam as your religion. [Maeda:3].*

1.9.2 Mysticism and Islam

Q: You have suggested Tasuuf (Mysticism) to be a part of Prophetic teachings. Could you please explain the view of Islam regarding Tasauuf.

A: Actually, the aim of Tasauuf is the purification of heart; to help people follow virtue and avoid vice; to have love for Allah and His Prophetﷺ; to fear the Day of Judgment; to love Allah's creation; not to commit sin; not to hold others in contempt; to inculcate humility. These are the objectives of Tasauuf. And can a Muslim deny the importance of these?

There is no doubt that in some periods of the human history, Tasauuf was made into philosophy and the thoughts of ancient thinkers from the East are also incorporated in it. The ways of worship / ascetic practices by other people also slowly crept into it. Thus, over the years, many accretions got added to it. As such it cannot be said to be an absolutely reliable way. It is not proper to accept everything that goes by the name of Tasauuf today. It is necessary to make distinctions between what is genuine and what is spurious. Things corroborated by the Quran and Hadith should be accepted, and things not corroborated by them should be rejected.

1.9.3 Merit of Christian Missions

Q: What are the merits of Christian missions that people feel drawn to it?

A: The merit of Christian missions lies in their social service and their good conduct. Allah has invested objects with specific qualities. For example, fire burns, ice cools, water slakes thirst and poison kills. Similarly, good conduct endears one to people. It wins over their heart. There is no distinction here between a Muslim and a non- Muslim. The Prophetﷺ had come from the Hera (cave), armed with this quality. At that time he had no weapon or manpower. This quality was instrumental in spreading Islam to all the corners of the world within a century. Wherever Muslims went, they proved to be a blessing for the people. The Christian world encountered it, particularly at the time of crusades and saw its impact. They made this good conduct their ideal, which is the cause of success for their missionaries.

Another factor that helped its growth is the fact that nowadays Christianity is what you want it to be. You can mould it in any way you like. If a Hindu becomes a Christian, it just involves a change of deity. His social values and culture remain the same. Then there are inducements to get new converts. Religions requiring “minimum change” become easily acceptable to people. Islam is a complete way of life that profoundly changes a person’s daily life. Hence it requires courage to step into its fold.

1.9.4 Why are other communities more honourable than the Muslim community?

Q: Why are Christians greater in number and why are other communities held in greater esteem than the Muslims?

A: First, I don’t agree with the proposition that Christians are greater in number. They are Christians only in name. You will not find real Christianity anywhere in the world. Second, greater number is no index of success. Hazrat Nooh (A.S) worked among his people for a very long

period. But very few people accepted his teachings; most continued with their ways of polytheism. Does it mean that Nooh (A.S) was a failure in Allah's eyes?

As for esteem, we ourselves are to blame for our dishonour. We break all the Commandments of Allah. Moreover, Allah's rule is that He might be soft towards non- Muslims, but He is severe to the Muslims in this world so that they understand the warnings and rectify themselves.

1.9.5 Was Hazart Masih (Christ) not a Perfect Guide?

Q: If Hazrat Masih's life was not a comprehensive one, how could he become a guide to his age?

A: The real objective of Christ (PBUH) coming into the world was the reform of the Jews, to remove the evils prevalent in the Jewish society and to forecast the advent of Muhammadﷺ. He (PBUH) fulfilled all these objectives, and offered guidance in the subjects expected of him. He (PBUH) was perfectly capable of discharging those duties. As for guidance in all the areas of life, the Torah was available to people for that purpose. As he (PBUH) did not reject the Shariah established by the Torah, and he (PBUH) brought no Shariah with him, the system of Moses (PBUH) continued in his age too.

1.9.6 Model of Parent-Child Relationship in the Mohammad'sﷺ Life

Q: The parents of the Prophetﷺ died when heﷺ was a child. How can his life provide an example for parent-child relationship?

A: Guidance is offered not only through actions but also through words. Detailed instructions about rights of parents and duties of children towards their parents are available in his utterances. These utterances are our guide on this subject. His uncles – Hazrat Hamza, Hazrat Abbas and Abu Talib were alive. Heﷺ accorded them the same status. His relationship with them can be a model in this regard.

1.9.7 Why is Zakat haram for the Prophet's ﷺ Descendants?

Q: If all Muslims are equal, then why is Zakat declared haram for the descendants of the Prophet ﷺ?

A: It was the Prophet's ﷺ temperament that when sacrifices were called for, he ﷺ kept those closest to him at the vanguard. From the Battle of Badr to the conquest of Makkah, he ﷺ sent those who were close to him, like Hazrat Hamza, Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Ubaid to the battlefront. And when rewards were to be given, they would come last. Just remember the occasion when slaves were being distributed among all the inhabitants of Madinah, but when Hazrat Fatima asked for one, she was reminded of "Tasbihat-e-Fatimi" (Remembering and glorifying God a certain number of times).

Another reason for Zakat being forbidden to the descendants of the Prophet ﷺ, was probably to save him from the accusation that on the pretext of Prophethood and Shariah (Islamic law), he ﷺ was accumulating money from people to spend on his family. That is why he ﷺ declared Zakat haram for his descendants not only during his lifetime but for all times.

1.9.8 Will "Sati" be allowed in an Islamic State?

Q: You said that non-Muslims will be allowed to practice their religion in an Islamic state. Then will "Sati" be allowed too?

A: "Sati" (wife's act of offering herself to be cremated alive with her dead husband), is an unjust and inhuman action. It is also harmful to the interest of the country as it will reduce human resource. Thus, "Sati" cannot be allowed. That is why the Muslim emperors in India allowed Hindus to practice all other religious rituals except "Sati" which they strictly prohibited.

CHAPTER 2
THE PROPHET ﷺ OF ISLAM
AND NON-MUSLIMS

Second Address

[4th Zillhijja, 1417H: 12th April 1997]

2.1 INTRODUCTION

It will be regarded as a strange fact of history that a Prophet ﷺ who was called ‘a blessing for humanity:

- On whom the first verse of the Quran that was revealed pertained to learning and knowledge
- Who had declared oneness of God, alone on the mountain of Safa
- Who, even in the battle of Badr paid obeisance to God rather than keeping his sword in hand
- Who, after the victory over Makkah, entered the town with such reverence that his forehead was touching the hump of the camel again and again being grateful to God
- Who had treated the prisoners of war from the battle of Badr, though they were instrumental in driving him away from his beloved town, with utmost kindness and sent them back clad in new dresses
- Who, after the victory of Makkah, did so much as look severely at his enemies but granted them general amnesty

To represent such a person as someone who was intolerant and cruel to his enemies, and to construct his statue as an arrogant figure wielding a sword in his hands, is the greater lie than this has never been told in human history.

The blessing that Allah sent in the form of Muhammad ﷺ has touched all creations, Muslims or non-Muslims, human beings or animals. He removed oppression and injustice and established justice and fraternity among people. He ﷺ linked all humanity to Hazrat Adam so that all

human beings became brothers. Heﷺ spread the message of love for everyone. Heﷺ said:

> *"Be kind to all on earth and He who lives in the skies will be kind to you".*

Heﷺ also said:

> *"You cannot be a true Muslim as long as you do not treat others as you want to be treated".*

Without making any distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims, heﷺ said,

> *"He is not a believer who eats well while his neighbours starve".*

At another place heﷺ is reported to have said:

> *"He is not a believer whose neighbour is not free from his mischief."*

There are two words used in Quran for neighbours:

> *(Be good to) Neighbours who are of kin (and) Neighbours who are strangers [Nisa: 36].*

Some commentators say that strangers ('Jar Junub' in Arabic) means non-Muslim- neighbours. It is said about Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar (R.A) that he got a goat slaughtered and instructed that the meat be sent to his neighbours. On his return home he asked whether the meat had been sent to the neighbours, who were Jews. As the answer was in the negative, he sent a portion especially for the Jew-neighbours.

2.2 GOOD RELATIONS WITH NON-MUSLIM RELATIVES

If you have a relative who is a non-Muslim, you should treat him the same way as you treat Muslim relatives. About parents, the Quran says:

> *But if they (non-Muslim parents) strive to make you join In worship with Me things of which you have no knowledge, obey them not Yet bear them company in this life with justice (and consideration)[Luqman: 15].*

That is if the parents are non-Muslims, you should treat them without distinction. Islam also allows marriage with women of The Book (Jews and Christians) and gives them the same rights as those of the Muslim wives. Of course, marrying such women may invite bitterness, given the cultural and intellectual defeatism through which Muslims are passing. Such marriages may result in the loss of religion for Muslims. It is also instructed that all other non-Muslim relatives should be treated with kindness and respect. It is known about Hazrat Umar (R.A.) that he had sent gifts to one of his polytheist brothers. Imam Mujahid (R.A.) used to say that it would earn rewards if one wrote off loans given to polytheist relatives. Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) had distributed 30 thousand dirham among her non-Muslim relatives. In short, as far as social relationships are concerned, Islam makes no distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims.

2.3 GENERAL BEHAVIOUR

Islam advocates pleasant behaviour with non-Muslims in general on the basis of common humanity. The Prophetﷺ himself attended upon a Jew youth who used to serve him. Heﷺ invited him at the last moment. The young man accepted Islam with the permission of his father. It is also known about the Prophetﷺ that heﷺ attended upon hypocrites. Heﷺ attended the funeral rites of Abdullah bin Abi who was a hypocrite. Heﷺ also attended upon his uncle Abu Talib and invited him to Islam even at the last moment.

According to the demands of decent human behaviour:

> *Once when the funeral procession of a Jew was passing by, heﷺ stood up to show respect. When people pointed out that it was the funeral procession of a Jew heﷺ said, "After all, he was a human being".*

During the war of Khandaq, a soldier (polytheist) had crossed over to the Muslim side and was killed by Hazrat Ali (R.A.). The infidels of Makkah wanted to secure the corpse by paying the ransom money. But

the Prophet ﷺ did not accept the money and allowed them to take away the corpse.

When a Christian delegation from Najran came to Madinah, they were put up in the mosque with utmost cordiality. One man, who later reverted to Islam, had visited the Prophet ﷺ and ate up all that the Prophet ﷺ had in his house. The Prophet ﷺ and his family had to starve, but he ﷺ did not show any displeasure.

The Jews often inflicted pain on the Prophet ﷺ and the Muslims whenever they got an opportunity. The Prophet ﷺ always showed utmost patience and ignored it.

> *During a conversation, a Jew said to a Muslim, "I swear by God who made Moses superior to all other creations." The Muslim asked, "To Mohammad ﷺ too?" The Jew answered, "Yes". The Muslim was infuriated by this and slapped him.*

Though the anger of the Muslim was justified because even the Bible recognizes the fact that Muhammad ﷺ is superior to all other prophets, the Prophet ﷺ reprimanded the Muslim saying that on the Day of Judgment, Hazrat Moosa (A.S.) would come to life first among all.

A Jew woman had invited him ﷺ and poisoned him ﷺ, but Allah saved him. He ﷺ ignored such a heinous crime on the woman's part. However, when one of his companions was killed in a similar manner, the person was killed as the rule of compensation dictated.

> *Some evil Jews would greet him ﷺ by saying "Assaam Alaikum" which means "Death on you". The companions were infuriated by this, but the Prophet ﷺ ignored the insult with characteristic gentlemanliness and simply said, "O Alaikum" in reply.*

2.4 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Prophet ﷺ of Islam did not ignore helping the poor and helpless among non-Muslims. At many places in the Quran and Hadith, there are instructions to treat prisoners with kindness and spend money on them. It is clear that the prisoners were non-Muslims. The Prophet ﷺ

himself is reported to have donated money to a non-Muslim family. Thus, according to Imam Abu Hanifah and other jurists, Sadqa-e-Fitr can be given to non-Muslims.

Several famous scholars like Abu Misra, Amr bin Maimoon and Amr bin Sharjeel are reported to have helped Christian monks with Sadqa-e-Fitr (Especial charity on the occasion of Ed). Hazrat Umar (R.A.) saw an old Jew begging and asked him the reason. The beggar said, "To fulfil my needs and to pay Jiziyah." Hazrat Umar (R.A) took him along with him and gave him substantial help from the government treasury, saying "It is not proper that we benefit from their labour when they are young and leave them to starve when they are old".

Similarly, non-Muslim brothers may be helped with Qurbani and other donations (except Zakat).

2.5 SECURITY TO LIFE

Those non-Muslims who are not at war with Muslims have the same right to life and blood as Muslims. The Quran commanded without making any distinction of religion:

> *"O you who believe, the law of equality is prescribed to you in case of murder" [Baqarah: 178].*

That is the killer of a person should be put to death to ensure security for all human beings. At another place, it says,

> *"Life for life" [Maida: 54].*

That is a life for a life. When a Muslim had killed a non-Muslim, the Prophet ﷺ got the Muslim killed and said:

> *"I will respect the promise of a non-Muslim who fulfils his promise."*

During the caliphate of Hazrat Umar (R.A.) a Muslim of the tribe Bakr bin Wail had killed a non-Muslim from Hera. Hazrat Umar (R.A) gave the instruction that if the dead man's people do not forgive the killer, let him be killed. This is about the worldly system; Muslims see everything from the point of view of the final day of Judgement.

The Prophet ﷺ declared that any Muslim who kills a 'Zimmi' (a non-Muslim in a Muslim country) will remain far away from Paradise.

Even in this age of democracy, distinction is made between the dead and price of blood. In India, if a Hindu is killed in Punjab or Kashmir, the compensation can be from one - two lakh. And if a Muslim dies in a communal riot the compensation will be from fifty-sixty thousand. The Prophet ﷺ of Islam made no such distinction and gave the principle that the price of life is the same for both Muslims and non-Muslims. He ﷺ paid the same compensation to non-Muslims.

Hazrat Usama bin Zaid reported that the Prophet ﷺ fixed the same rate of compensation for free Muslims as for non-Muslims.

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (R.A.) reported that during the caliphate of Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.A), Hazrat Umar (R.A), Hazrat Usman (R.A) and Ali (R.A), the rate of compensation for Muslims, Christians and Jews was the same. All these instances will make it clear how Islam ensures the security of human life without making any distinction between religions.

2.6 SECURITY OF PROPERTY

The property of non-Muslims had the same importance in the eyes of the Prophet ﷺ and Islam as the property of Muslims.

He ﷺ decreed that it is absolutely forbidden to lay hands on the property of non-Muslims.

He ﷺ had given this instruction after Khaibar battle when, even after the truce, some Muslims had acted high-handedly. The punishment for a thief is chopping of hand, whether he steals from Muslims or non-Muslims. Hazrat Ibn Hadrad had borrowed money from a Jew. When he did not pay up in time, the Jew complained to the Prophet ﷺ. Ibn Hadrad made the excuse that he had nothing except two sheets to repay the loan. When the Prophet ﷺ asked him to pay for the third time, he took one sheet to the market, sold it and paid the load. The Prophet ﷺ

intended to impress upon the fact that the loan taken from a non-Muslim should be paid back as promptly.

Some properties are illegal in the eyes of Shariah. If, God forbids, any Muslim puts wine or pigs in someone's custody, and if that person loses it, there will be no compensation. But if a person spoils / destroys the wine or pigs of a person whose religion permits him to use these objects, then the Muslim will have to compensate for it. This indicates that Islam ensures the security of the property of both Muslims and non-Muslims.

2.7 RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

The most important issue is of religious tolerance of one religion for another and among the adherents of one religion. In Islam, there is no scope for the principle of "Give and Take" with other communities in the matters of religion. Muslims cannot accept such trade-offs regarding their religion, culture and civilization. This is not tolerance but selling one's conscience and Iman. Tolerance means that there should be respect for other religion and no interference with them. Regarding this it may be said that Islam has taught human beings edifying lessons of tolerance, mutual respect and taught them ways of peaceful co-existence. The Quran declared unequivocally that there would be no recourse to force in the matters of religion.

Let there be no compulsion in religion [Baqarah:256]

The best example of religious tolerance was the pact that the Prophetﷺ made with the Jews and others after coming to Madinah. According to this pact, everyone was free to practice his own religion. The Quran instructed Muslims not to abuse the deities worshipped by the people of other religions. The Quran also says that Allah sent Prophets to all communities and divine words were revealed to them in their own languages. These statements make it obligatory upon Muslims to respect Prophets and reforms of other communities, because it is not entirely impossible that the figures that are being worshipped now had at one time been Prophets and preachers of God's unity.

The teachings of the Prophet ﷺ made Muslim jurists stipulate that the non-Muslims will have their religious rights protected if they are living under Muslim rule. The famous Hanafi jurist Hidaya wrote that:

> *"If the fire-worshippers have the practice of marrying their own mother or sister and if the fire-worshippers practice this custom while living under Muslim rule, even then the Muslim government does not have the right to interfere in their personal life".*

Even if one of the parties brings such as issue to our court, we cannot interfere as long as both the parties approach the Muslim court. That is why during Muslim rule, and even in our country, the emperors always protected the personal law.

2.8 PRAYER HOUSES OF NON-MUSLIMS

The Prophet ﷺ showed the same generosity to the prayer-houses of non-Muslims. He had instructed that:

> *"During a battle, people related to prayer-houses should not be killed".*

Hazrat Umar bin Abdul Aziz instructed all his governors that:

> *"No church or fire temple be destroyed"*

After the victory over Baitul Muqaddas, Hazrat Umar (R.A) had gone there and with the permission, rather the desire, of the caretakers of the church, performed Salah there. Then he (R.A) got a special document made for the church so that the Muslims, do not try to convert it into a mosque. Even after the caretakers urged him, he never performed Salah there again, in case the Muslims, seeing him perform Salah, try to convert it into their own prayer house.

When Hazrat Muavia (R.A) built the Jama Masjid in Damascus, there was a small church adjacent to it. He offered the Christians a high price to sell it off so that the courtyard of the mosque could be broadened. But the Christians did not agree. Then Marwan made the same proposal in his time, but the Christians did not agree. After that, Abdul Malik tried

to persuade them, but the Christians remained adamant. Angered by this, he picked up a spade and struck at the church. He destroyed it and annexed the land to the mosque. When Hazrat Umar bin Abdul Aziz became the Caliph and endeavoured to compensate the damages done during the Umaiyad period, the Christians of Damascus approached him to restore the church. Hazrat Umar bin Abdul Aziz wrote to the governor of Syria to return that part of the mosque to the Christians on which the church was built. Eventually, the Muslims succeeded in persuading the Christians to give up their rights on that piece of land and thus the mosque was saved from destruction.

The Prophet's ﷺ generosity extended so far in this regard that:

> *When a famous church father from Yemen, Abi Al Haris visited along with a 60-member delegation and wanted to offer prayers, he ﷺ allowed them to pray at one corner of the Prophet's ﷺ Mosque and they held their prayers there.*

In the light of instructions from the Prophet ﷺ and the practical examples set down by the Caliphs, the Muslim jurists have formulated principles of religious freedom and co-existence with non-Muslims. It was declared impermissible for Muslims to offer prayers on any land acquired by force or build any mosque on it. Thus, the canard spread against Muslims that they occupied the prayer houses of other communities and built mosques on them is an absolute lie.

2.9 JIHAD (STRUGGLE) – AN EFFORT TO STOP OPPRESSION

The issue that causes misunderstanding in many people about Islam is its concept of Jihad (struggle). The media has transformed it to perpetration of violence and terrorism. But the reality is very different from it. Jihad is a weapon against oppression; its objective is to snatch away the instrument of oppression from oppressors. There are occasions when persuasion and preaching do not work, and battle becomes necessary. The philosophy of non-violence does not work in all situations. In many of our provinces, the trend of separatism is increasing. Our borders are also under attack from our neighbours.

Under such circumstances, can any patriotic citizen of the country suggest that we should ignore our defence preparations and should not prepare ourselves to face any danger in this regard? Today, the countries that claim to be civilized and protectors of human rights are themselves proliferators of weapons of mass destruction. These weapons have destroyed lakhs of innocent human lives in the last fifty years.

2.9.1 Judaism and War

The question is – has there been any religion that absolutely forbade war? A horrifying concept of war prevailed among the Jews. It is written in the Bible:

> *"When you cross over Yarun and reach Kannan, drive away all those settled there and destroy them, break their idols, destroy their tall buildings, dispose those who are there and settle down yourselves" (Istisna 33: 50-54).*

In the Bible, the non-Christians have been divided into two groups in times of war; one, that area which, according to Jewish faith, God has given them as their chosen land. The law of war here is that all men and married women should be killed. The unmarried girls should be spared for their own use. The second area is outside this chosen land. In this part nothing should be spared – men, women, children and even animals.

2.9.2 Christianity and War

Christians think that their religion is not one of war, although in the modern world, the Christian communities are primarily responsible for widespread destruction. At many places in Torah, incitement was given to war. Hazrat Masih (PBUH) said:

> *"Don't think that I have come to annul Torah or the Books of other prophets. I have come to complete them." [Mathew 5-7, Luke 12:17].*

The words of Hazrat Masih (PBUH) also indicate towards Jihad:

"Do not think that I have come into the world to make peace; rather I have come to wield the sword" [Mathew 10: 34-36].

On one occasion Hazrat Masih (PBUH) instructed his followers to sell their clothes and buy swords [Luke 22:36].

It is also to be noted that after attaining Prophethood he lived only for three years. He had fewer occasions for preaching and fewer followers, affording him little scope for Jihad.

2.9.3 Hinduism and War

Hinduism claims itself to be a religion of non-violence and peace. Gandhiji felt that this is the foremost quality of Hinduism. But the history of Hinduism is littered with wars. The Ramayana tells the story of Sri Ram's life and the terrible war between Rama and Ravana. The Gita revered by the Hindus and characterized as his mother by Gandhiji, is entirely taken up with the war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Kaurvas and the Pandavas belong to the two branches of the same family who confront each other for the sake of the throne. When Arjun, the chief of the Pandavas, witnesses his relatives ranged against each other, his heart begins to sink and he wants to avoid this war. Sri Krishna (who, according to the Hindu belief, is the reincarnation of God) taunts him and incites him to war and gives him a string of advice on the philosophy of war. The gist of this is that according to the laws of reincarnation, every person is reborn, so there is no harm in killing human beings. It is said that the body is like a dress for the soul. Thus, killing a human being, amounts to take off old clothes and put on new ones. It is clear that this is not a bad thing. Sri Krishna said that as all human beings are destined to die one day, what is so terrible about killing them? Krishanji further said that when a person attains real knowledge, he is no longer bound by sin or merit. Every action becomes redundant for him.

In the light of the above, how can it be said that there is no violence in the Hindu religion? Besides the Ramayana and the Gita, there are

innumerable verses in the Vedas that contain instructions of war and joy of victory. I will mention just one extract to illustrate this point:

> *"Bring that which gives happiness, the wealth of the victor that can help us to destroy our enemies in war" [Rigveda 1: 8:1,2].*

2.9.4 The Concept of Jihad in Islam

To understand the concept of Jihad in Islam you have to keep in mind three things:

- What is the purpose of Jihad?
- Who has the permission to conduct Jihad?
- What are principles governing the conduct of Jihad?

Jihad is not understood in Islam as attacking other countries and insulting their people. Rather, Jihad is used to protect oneself and one's religion.

> *Those who 'believe', Fight in the cause of Allah And those who reject Faith, Fight in the cause of Evil [Nisa:76].*

That is "Jihad means to protect people from the atrocity of oppressors and stop oppression."

> *Those who against whom War is made, permission is given to (Fight)[Haj: 39].*

That is Jihad is not another name of oppression and violence, but the last recourse to save humanity from oppression and terror. That is why the Quran exhorts:

> *And why should you not Fight in the cause of Allah And of those who, being weak, Are ill-treated (and oppressed) Men, women and children [Nisa:75]*

Thus, it is not proper to compare other wars with the Jihad conducted by the Prophet ﷺ. The wars that are being fought in the world today have no legitimate objective, except for having control over the land and resources of other people. Europe is the ring-leader in this barbaric

endeavour. The world wars perpetrated by the Europeans manifested their object and limitless brutality. Have they brought about any revolution or any good to humanity? As opposed to this, the Jihad by the Prophetﷺ brought about a revolution by subduing the oppressors that changed the face of human history for all times. This fact is recognized even by those who did not accept Islam.

2.10 RELATION WITH NON-MUSLIM MINORITY

Besides, Jihad does not mean that you attack any non-Muslim that you come across. In the light of the Quran and Hadith, jurists have divided non-Muslims into three groups – Zimmi, Muahid, and Harbi.

2.10.1 Zimmi (A non-Muslim in a Muslim Country)

Non-Muslims under Muslim rule are generally called Zimmi. Some people think that it is a pejorative term, but it is not so. ‘Zimmi’ in Arabic means ‘Ahed’ i.e. pact. Zimmi are those with whom Muslims have entered into a pact to live in peace by protecting mutual rights. Thus, by calling them Zimmi, Muslims are reminded of their duties towards them. The rights enjoyed by Zimmi are the same as those enjoyed by Muslims.

It is true that Islam imposes a welfare tax called ‘Jiziyah’ on them. This is not to denigrate them but to protect their rights. Thus, Hazrat Umar (R.A) had left suitable instructions for his successor in this regard.

a) The Reality of Jiziyah

There is a lot of misunderstanding about Jiziyah that it needs to be clarified. Two things should be kept in mind in this regard. One, Islam has imposed some economic responsibilities on Muslims; Zakat (2.5% charity) and Ushr (10-20% charity) being the most important among them. Ushr is imposed on agricultural produce, whereas Zakat is paid in respect on gold, silver etc. These responsibilities are part of a Muslim’s obligatory religious duty, so that he should not think that he is doing a favour to others. One condition could have been that no tax was imposed on non-Muslims. This would have made day-to-day

administration difficult, in the absence of revenue from a large section of people. The second condition could be that non-Muslims were also asked to pay Zakat and Ushr. This would have been construed as imposition of Islamic principles on non-Muslims and curbing their religious freedom. So, Jiziyah was the only reasonable way out.

b) Quantum of Jiziyah

It should be noted that the amount of Jiziyah is a meagre one. For lower income group it is 14 Dirhams per annum, 24 Dirhams per annum for the middle income groups and 48 Dirhams for the high income group. Twelve Dirhams amount to about 3 Tolas of silver. According to the current rate of exchange 12 Dirhams amount to more or less 275 Rupees. Now, can it be called oppression, if such a meagre amount is taken for the security of the entire year? In fact, we will feel grateful to our government if it can offer security to Muslims by taking this amount from them. This is the reality of Jiziyah about which the western media makes such a fuss, calling it Islamic oppression against non-Muslims.

2.10.2 Muahiddeen (Non-Muslims of a non-Muslim Country)

The second group of non-Muslims is called “Muahideen” who are citizens of a non-Muslim country with which Muslims have entered into a pact for mutual benefit and peace. They are also in the category of Zimmis and their life and property as sacrosanct as those of Muslims. It is not permissible to do anything that violates the pact.

2.11 THE PROPHETﷺ OF ISLAM AND DECENT RULES OF WAR

The Prophetﷺ of Islam has permitted to make war only with those who were the enemies of Islam and humanity. Islam is the only religion that had probably made decent rules of war for the first time Heﷺ instructed the soldiers to follow some principles at the time war. Heﷺ said that old people, women and children should not be made targets. In one tradition, heﷺ made the same stipulation about labourers. Heﷺ said:

"Do not kill anyone associated with church and other houses of prayers".

On the occasion of the victory over Makkah, when Hazrat Khalid Bin Waleed (R.A) had killed some people of Banu Jazeema, he ﷺ paid the compensation for them through Hazrat Ali (R.A.).

A tradition attributed to Hazrat Anas (R.A.) has it that attacks were not carried out without apriory warning. They waited for morning before mounting attack. It was forbidden that the dead should be mutilated. "Qatal-e-Sabar" i.e to target someone after having him bound was also forbidden.

On the victory of Makkah he ﷺ had announced, "The wounded should not be attacked, the fugitives should not be chased and the prisoners should not be killed. Those who close their doors should not be attacked." He ﷺ further said that no one should be thrown in fire, as only Allah has this privilege.

This makes it clear that in Islam use of fire arms and nuclear weapons is not permissible except in dire need, because they burn soldiers and often innocent people are also killed.

Plunder is an inevitable part of the war, but the Prophet ﷺ decreed against it. In the battle of Khaibar, even after the truce, some Muslims could not restrain themselves. They had entered the house of Jews, beaten up some of the women and helped themselves to eatables. When the Prophet ﷺ came to know of it, he ﷺ expressed his displeasure and said:

"It is not at all permissible for you to enter the houses of the people of the Book without permission".

Some soldiers had picked up some goats, slaughtered them and were cooking them. The Prophet ﷺ was furious when he ﷺ got to know of it and got the vessels turned upside down.

The Quran instructed Muslims not to destroy the harvests and fields of the people they were going to attack, characterizing such people as "Mufsids" (i.e., violence makers).

> *When he (the mischievous) turns back, his aim everywhere is to spread mischief through the earth and destroy crops and* progeny *but Allah loves not mischief [Baqarah: 205].*

The Prophet ﷺ also gave instructions about the movement of troops. He ﷺ forbade them to create any tumult, instructed them to keep on moving as well as breaking their journey, so as to avoid any trouble, and also forbade them from causing inconvenience or threatening the passers-by. He ﷺ warned that the Jihad undertaken by such people will not be accepted by Allah.

He ﷺ also adhered to the rules of negotiation. When Ibada bin Haris, the messenger of Musailima Kazzab appeared before him he ﷺ said:

> *"I would have killed you if you were not an ambassador."*

Hazrat Abu Rafey (R.A.) had come to the Prophet ﷺ as the ambassador of the people of Makkah and accepted Islam. When he showed unwillingness to return to Makkah, the Prophet ﷺ insisted that he (R.A) must return and should not violate the rules of negotiation.

The basis of the laws of war in modern times is supposed to be the Hague Conference of 1899. But actually it was the Prophet ﷺ who gave the first rules of war to protect human decency and dignity. People of the developed world make great fuss about the rules of war but they are the ones who violate them first.

2.11.1 Treating the Vanquished with Generosity

Gentlemen, these were the rules that were operative at the time of war. But whenever Muslims won the war, the Prophet ﷺ instructed them to treat the vanquished kindly and follow the principles of 'forgive and forget'. In this respect, the victory over Makkah stands as a shining example. He ﷺ had ten thousand fighters at his bidding and all those who had made his ﷺ life miserable; who had ostracized his family and

made the children of Banu Hashim beg for a morsel of bread; who had got hisﷺ daughter divorced; who had dragged the weak Muslims over hot sand and made them lie down over live embers; who had wanted to plunder and lay waste the city of Madinah where Muslims had taken refuge before himﷺ. Among them was Abu Sufiyan who had always led the battle against Muslims. There was Hinda who had chewed the liver of Hazrat Hamza, the Prophet'sﷺ uncle. There was Akrama, the son of Abu Jehl who was the worst enemy of Islam. None of them had accepted Islam till the victory over Makkah.

But that day the Prophetﷺ did not take revenge. When heﷺ asked them what kind of treatment they expected of himﷺ, they said, "That of a decent brother with his brother, and of a nephew with his uncle." He declared general peace. Not only did he announce the cessation of enmity but heﷺ went a step further and ensured their honour. Abu Sufiyan was the chief of the Quraish tribe. Heﷺ said about him:

"Those who take refuge in his house are safe."

Hazrat Akrama (R.A) embraced Islam and the Prophetﷺ greeted him with open arms and instructed the Companions not to say anything dishonourable about Abu Jehl as it was not proper to shame a Muslim son for his infidel father. Heﷺ said the same thing when Abu Lahab's daughter Hazrat Durrah (R.A) embraced Islam. Such instances of human and humane treatment to a vanquished people are indeed rare in the annals of human history.

2.11.2 The Prophet'sﷺ Treatment of Prisoners of War

Before the emergence of Islam, and even, after it, the most oppressed group was that of the prisoners of war. Be it Rome, Persia or Arabia, these prisoners were made slaves and were treated worse than animals. In Europe, large stadia were built where these slaves were set to fight wild animals and spectators watched the spectacle of their death.

The Prophetﷺ of Islam established a new example of humane treatment of prisoners of war. The six thousand prisoners of war from the battle of

Hunain were released without any ransom. From the battle of Badr, there were seventeen prisoners of war. The Prophet ﷺ freed them with honour and new dresses were also stitched for them. He ﷺ distributed them among his Companions who treated them so well that they (Companions) would starve in order to feed them and would see to it that they did not have any inconvenience.

Now, compare this human and extremely generous treatment of prisoners of war with that of Napoleon who had killed four thousand Turk prisoners of war simply because he considered it a liability to feed them.

2.11.3 The Casualties in the War led by the Prophet ﷺ and Those in the War by the Other Communities – A Comparison.

The Prophet's ﷺ concept of Jihad will remain incomplete if do not record the fact that how few were the casualties in the battles that brought about such a revolution. The battles and encounters led by the Prophet ﷺ numbered 82. The number of Muslim martyrs in these battles was 259 and the number of non-Muslims killed was 759. The total number of casualties was 1018. In other words, the average casualties per war were little more than 11.

Now, compare these figures with the casualties of war in other communities. According to the history of the Hindus, lakhs of people were killed in the battle of Mahabharata.

The number of people killed by religious wars during the heyday of the church rule was said to be 1 crore 20 lakhs, of whom 3 lakh 20 thousand were from Spain alone. Among these casualties, 32 thousand unfortunate ones were burnt to death. It was usual for the Christian church to order people to be burnt to death. Probably, the Christian religious leaders derived a special pleasure out of it. When the Christians took over Baitul Muqaddas for the first time, 70 thousand Muslims were killed without making any distinction between combatants and innocent men, women, children the old and the infirm. The Christian historians recorded that the whole area was littered with

dismembered bodies. They were burnt in a huge bonfire. But when the same place was re-conquered by the Muslim, the just Sultan Salahuddin Ayubi had declared a general amnesty. However, as the Christians were not ready to live with the Jews, separate areas were earmarked for them.

The casualties in the First World War, according to conservative estimates, were 74 lakh. What an irony that those people who claim to be the custodians of civilization and culture perpetrated such crimes against humanity and they now dare to accuse Muslims of violence and bloodshed.

2.11.4 Our Lethargy and Indifference

By now it must be clear to you how untrue the propaganda against Jihad and the Prophet'sﷺ practice of it is. It is regrettable that we Muslims, because of our lethargy and indifference, could not present before the world the humane face of Islam and save the image of the Prophetﷺ from being tarnished by the enemies of Islam. Not only are others but even we are also to be blamed for this. We have never made any rigorous and consistent efforts to present Islam in its true image. We are masters in bringing out rallies and organizing huge assemblies, but we never tried to take the message of Islam to our non-Muslim brothers. Even the new generation of Muslims have learned about Islam and the Prophetﷺ from the books written by the Orientalists, and their minds are filled with misconceptions about it. I wish and pray that we concentrate on this work and try to take the message of Islam and its Prophetﷺ to the wide world.

The reference here is to the statue installed in the supreme court of America where the statues of the famous law-makers of the world are installed. The sword-wielding statue of the Prophetﷺ represents the prejudice of the western world against Islam.

2.12 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

2.12.1 Offering Condolence to Non-Muslims

Q. How does one console the death of a non-Muslim?

It is proper, rather desirable to share the joys and sorrows of non-Muslims, so that they get to know about the magnanimity of Islam. One is permitted to offer condolences to a non-Muslim. The difference is, while consoling the death of a Muslim you should pray for Allah's forgiveness for the dead, but while consoling the death of a non-Muslim you should covey your sympathy to his / her relatives. Scholars have suggested these words, "May Allah improve your circumstances."

2.12.2 Taking Part in the Final Rites of Non-Muslims

Q.Is it allowed to take part in the final rites of non-Muslims? Sometimes, Muslims have to go to the funeral of Hindus. What are the instructions in this regard?

A. It is not permissible to pray for Allah's forgiveness for non-Muslims. Even otherwise, it is not desirable to take part in a funeral for any non-Muslim. However, if the absence of such a participant can affect mutual relationship then he / she can go to convey his / her sympathy for the relatives. As the Prophet ﷺ had instructed Hazrat Ali (R.A) to look after the funeral rites of Abu Talib (Father of Ali).

2.12.3 Zakat, Sadaqah and Non-Muslims

Q. Can a non-Muslim be given Zakat and other religious donations?

A. It is proper to give Zakat to Muslims only. The Prophet ﷺ had said that Zakat should be taken from the rich among Muslims and should be given to the poor among them. However, Imam Abu Hanifa opined that the obligatory donations, including Sadaqah al-Fitr can be given to non-Muslims as well. The voluntary donations, on the other hand, can be given to non-Muslims.

2.12.4 Eating Prasad

Q. Non-Muslim friends sometimes offer us Prasad (consecrated food) and expect us to share in their joys. Is it allowed to eat such Prasad?

A. You can take gifts from non-Muslims that are not related to their religious rituals. For example, if they send you sweets or other gifts on

marriage, birth of children or some other happy occasions, you can accept them. But the eatables that were given as offerings to the deities should not be accepted. Then, even if the manner of slaughter is not taken into account, the Quran has declared the animals killed in shrines etc. 'Haram' because that amounts to polytheism. This element is present in case of Prasad as well.

2.12.5 Invitation by Non-Muslims

Q. If one is invited to a non-Muslim's home and offered eatables that could have been used for Puja (but one cannot be certain), is it permissible to accept such invitation?

A. If one does not know that the eatables have been used for Puja and if one does not have clear reasons for such a conjecture, then one can accept such invitation. In Islamic law instructions are valid only in case of certainty or near-certainty. One should not take decision merely on the basis of conjecture. Some element of doubt always remains. The Prophet ﷺ and the Companions accepted invitations from non-Muslims and had eaten food without making investigations.

2.12.6 Taking Part in the Festivals of Non-Muslims

Q. Some non-Muslims take part in the festivals of Muslims. Is it allowed for Muslims to take part in their religious festivals?

A. The roots of religious festivals are to be found in religious beliefs. Some elements of polytheism are present in the festivals of non-Muslims. Thus, participation in such festivals is not allowed. Some people had approached the Prophet ﷺ for permission to celebrate the coming of the spring season like the Iranians and to organize a festival on its passing away, but the Prophet ﷺ did not give permission. It was also forbidden to offer prayer (Salah) at sunrise, sunset and at noon as they were the times for specific rituals in other religions. Thus, when Islam does not want any similarity with non-Muslims' festivals, even with the timing of their prayers, how can it allow participation in their festivals?

2.12.7 Inviting Non-Muslims

Q. Can non-Muslims be invited? Is it proper for non-Muslims to visit Muslim families?

A. It is not only permissible to invite non-Muslims, but also desirable to do so if it is expected that they would be drawn to Islam or at least, their attitude towards Muslims will soften. When Prophetﷺ was instructed that heﷺ should invite close relatives to embrace Islam, heﷺ gathered the people of Banu Hashim tribe and made arrangements to feed them. Thus, it was established that if non-Muslims are invited with good intentions, it becomes an act of Sunnah (Teachings of Mohammadﷺ). As far as non-Muslims visiting Muslim households are concerned, they can do so within the restrictions of the Islamic law if there is no fear of any harm.

2.12.8 Giving Zamzam Water and Dates to Non-Muslims

Q. Is it permissible to give Zamzam water and dates to non-Muslim brothers? Some of them ask for these and eat them with great devotion.

A. Zamzam is sacred water and the dates from Makkah and Madinah are also sacred because of their association with those places. However, these are eatables and the Prophetﷺ entertained hisﷺ non-Muslim visitors with dates from Madinah. Hence, there is no reason to think that it is impermissible to give them to non-Muslims.

I think while giving these to non-Muslim brothers we should pray in our minds that Allah, because of these sacred objects, will draw these non-Muslims towards Islam. It is said in the Hadith that Zamzam cures ailment and what can be a more serious spiritual ailment than Kufr (Deviation from right)?

2.12.9 Going to the Church at the Invitation of Christian Friends

Q. Is it permitted to go to the church at the invitation of a Christian, e.g. to please one's children?

A. It is not permitted to go to places of worship of non-Muslims if it indicates reverence for their gods. However, if the objective is just to see the building or meet someone inside it or some similar task, then it is permitted. We know about Hazrat Umar's (R.A.) visit to some Churches in Baitul Muqaddas and performing Salah there. Similarly, in some Traditions, it is recorded that Hazrat Umme Salma and Hazrat Umme Habiba had recounted to the Prophet ﷺ the description of some churches of black people. It is clear that they could not have described them without inspecting them from inside.

2.12.10 If the Non-Muslims Object To Azan

Q. Some non-Muslims object to Azan. Can we object to their Bhajan?

A. India is a democratic country. The constitution of India gives all religious groups the right to worship. The proper way should be that the Hindus do not object to the Azan while Muslims do not object to Bhajans. Each group should concentrate on its own ways and show toleration for the practices of other groups. However, a lot of it depends on the law of the land. If the law forbids the use of loudspeaker, it should be equally valid for both. Both the groups should stay within the limits of law and should try to resolve contentious matters with patience and in a spirit of accommodation.

2.10.11 Can Non-Muslims be Friends of Muslims

Q. What is the meaning of the Quranic assertion that Kafirs (non-Muslims) cannot be the friends of Muslims?

A. The real import of this statement is that from the spiritual perspective, an infidel cannot be a real friend or well-wisher of a Muslim. Of course, there can be affinity based on same locality, language, social and economic interests resulting in personal friendship, but the deep gulf between faith and disbelieve will certainly stand in the way of their friendship. Thus, from a spiritual and cultural point of view, Muslims should avoid very close proximity with non-Muslims. In this regard scholars have distinguished between 'inawasat' and

'inawalat'. While the first stands for good relationship with non-Muslims and it is desirable, the latter means acceptance of their influence, which is not permitted.

2.12.12 Jihad (struggle) in Western Countries

Q. Now-a-days, the Westerners pretend to be friends of Muslims, but they are involved in a deep conspiracy against Muslims. Is it proper to declare Jihad against them?

A. Now-a-days, most of the governments of the world run on democratic principles. In a democratic set-up, the non-Muslims living with Muslims become "Muahedeen' with whom Muslims enter into a contract for the peace and good of the country. Jihad is not permitted against the parties with whom Muslim have made pact, till the pact is annulled constitutionally. Just think the kind of plots that the infidels had hatched against the Prophet ﷺ but he ﷺ ignored them. The Jews also conspired against him ﷺ, but for a long time he ﷺ bore their mischief patiently. Finally, when they came out in the open and violated the contract, only then did the Prophet ﷺ take military action against them. For declaring Jihad, there are many other conditions that do not obtain in those countries.

2.12.13 When is Jihad Permitted?

.Q: Is Jihad permitted in a country where there is no oppression of Muslims but restrictions on the propagation of Islam?

A: First, there is hardly any country in the world (after the disintegration of the Soviet Union) where there is a restriction on conversion or preaching. Jihad, in fact indicates the completion of the process of inviting people to Islam. If a community is given the message of Islam in its entirety and if it does not accept it, but on the contrary follows the path of hostility against Islam, only then can Jihad be declared. There is hardly any part of the world today where the Muslim brothers have carried the message of Islam in its entirety. When the first stage of

Dawah (preaching) has not been accomplished, how can Jihad be justified?

2.12.14 Mass Killing of Jews in the Battle of Khandaq

Q. After the battle of Khandaq, Jews were killed in a large number. How can this be explained?

A: After the battle of Khandaq, 400 Jews of military age were killed. Women and children were spared. Several things need to be known to understand it.

First, the Jews violated the pact right after the battle. They conspired with the infidels in Makkah to wipe out every single Muslim from Madinah. It is clear that Muslims had to kill them in their own defence.

Second, the decision of killing the Jews was not taken by the Prophetﷺ. The Jews had not agreed to make himﷺ the arbitrator. Rather, they had chosen Saad bin Maaz (R.A) the arbitrator who pronounced the sentence of death on them. That is why the responsibility of this killing cannot be laid at the door of the Prophetﷺ or Islam.

Third, Hazrat Saad bin Maaz (R.A) pronounced this sentence on the basis of the laws of war laid by their own law (i.e., the law of Torah), which cannot be called unjust or unfair.

2.12.15 Giving Qurbani Meat to Non-Muslims

Q: What is the instruction about giving Qurbani meat to non-Muslims?

A; It is permissible and proper to give the meat of Qurbani to non-Muslims. I think in the present circumstances it is desirable to do so, as it would remove the strangeness and increase familiarity. Non-Muslims will realize that Muslims are so generous in their religious observances that they want to share their joys with their non-Muslims brothers.

CHAPTER 3
THE PROPHET OF ISLAM
AND WOMEN
Third Address

[5th Zillhijja, 1417H: 13th April, 1997]

3.1 INTRODUCTION

By going against the laws of nature, the West has torn apart the social system. The concept of family has changed drastically; so have human relationships. So much so that in the western countries, it is through the mother, rather than the father, that the child is identified. It is so shameful that even the devil will be ashamed seeing such human beings. If animals had the power of speech, they would have cursed them.

The destruction of the family system has affected women the most. Women have been compelled to go out of their houses, work for a living, and at the same time serve their husbands. They have become the means for sales-promotion of commercial goods. Sacrificing their femininity and modesty, they are made to work in shops, offices and hotels. What a shame! Western culture has made such abject slaves of women in the name of emancipation that probably women were not so much exploited even in the Dark Ages and in the eras of cultural decadence."

Gentlemen and Ladies, today I am going to speak on an important issue, a burning issue in the whole world that has implications for our whole social organization and its foundation. Allama Iqbal had said:

"The existence of women has made the world a place of colour."

Today, the presence of women not only puts colour in the material world, but in the world of thought and knowledge and the issue of women's rights and duties exercises everyone's mind. The Prophet ﷺ of Islam is like a shower of blessing on humanity and you very well know that when rains pour down on the earth, it makes no distinction of race,

colour, creed, language, etc. Everyone in the world has been benefited by the Prophet's ﷺ blessings. However, two groups of people were most oppressed at the time of his Prophethood i.e., women and slaves. That is why he ﷺ paid special attention to them. The issue of the slaves will be taken up in my next address.

3.2 WOMEN IN OTHER CIVILISATIONS

Today I wish to concentrate on the Prophet's ﷺ attitude towards women. Before the advent of Islam, women were either considered sinful or the play things of men. Islam gave them such honour that in the Quran, there is a whole chapter dedicated to them. Its title is "An-Nisa" (means the women). It is to be noted that there is no corresponding chapter called "Al-Rijal" meant for men. Another chapter in the Quran is titled after the name of a pure woman "Maryam" (PBUH). These instances indicate that the Quran and the Prophet ﷺ give utmost importance to women.

3.2.1 Women in Hinduism

To understand the Prophet's ﷺ attitude towards women we must have some idea of the status of women before him ﷺ.

In Hinduism, for the salvation of parents, the son must perform several religious rituals. This means that women have lesser status before God in Hinduism. Brahmacharya (Bachelorhood) was encouraged and it was considered desirable that men should marry at the age of fifty. Women had no right to property; there was no concept of divorce as men and women were not considered two equal parties. On the contrary, women were considered men's property. Hence there was no question of separation after marriage. Nowadays, some Hindu thinkers object to polygamy in Islam though Malik Ram has demonstrated that multiple wives are permissible in Hinduism. We all know about the multiple husbands of Draupadi in the Mahabharat which is a proof, enough for the disgrace and dishonour of women.

It might be true that "Sati" is not an essential part of Hinduism, but the concept that the wife is the husband's property must have led to this custom of burning the wife along with the dead husband so that both might leave the world together. Actually, our Hindu brothers should be grateful to the Muslim rulers who, thought following the policy of non-interference in matters of religion, tried to eliminate this despicable custom and thus preserved the lives of many people.

The most oppressed group under the Hindu laws is of the widows who are not allowed to marry after the death of their husbands. Just imagine if a young woman with children becomes a widow, how will she maintain herself and bring up her children? The Hindu thinkers have advised "Niyog" for such women. Dayanand Saraswati has elaborated on this concept in his book "Satyartha Prakash". "Niyog", according to Hindu religious books means a Hindu widow's sexual liaison with the husband's younger brother or any other man. Hindu women whose husbands are alive are also allowed to have such relations, with the permission of their husband, in order to beget children. I need not explain how undesirable the idea of "Niyog' is from a moral and cultural standpoint. I only hope such an oppressive custom is not an essential part of the real Hinduism and the great Hindu thinkers had desired no such thing, but that it is the result of interpolations and distortions.

That is why in 1956 the laws that were legislated to govern Hindu society were different from those mentioned above. They manifest the impact of Islamic influence.

3.2.2 Women in Judaism

It is said in the Torah that after the birth of a male child, the woman remains pure for 7 days and she bleeds for 23 days. And after the birth of a girl child she remains impure for 15 days and bleeds for 66 days. These observations indicate that women are considered to be impure and have a low status. Among the Jews, girls can inherit property only if there is no male heir. Even in that case, the eldest inherits four times

more than the younger sister. Multiple wives are allowed though their maximum number is not fixed. Hazrat Dawood (A.S) had six wives, Hazrat Moosa (A.S) had two wives. The Torah has not prohibited divorce. What are the reasons for divorce and how is it to be effected? The Bible says in this regard,

> *"If one ceases to love a woman, let him write the divorce declaration, hand it over to her and turn her out of the house."*

3.2.3 Women in Christianity

The earliest version of the Bible has the status of scripture of the Christians. Thus the laws of Torah are equally valid for Christians too. The status of women is even lowlier than among the Jews. Christianity tells us:

> *"It was not Adam who was hoodwinked, but the woman who was befooled and she sinned".*

The fundamental belief among the Christians is that Hazrat Hawwa (A.S) (Eve) sinned and this original sin is carried on by all the generations of human beings. That is why in Christianity it is desirable to avoid marriage. St. Paul says:

> *"It is better for men not to touch women".*

In the history of Christianity, monasteries had a seminal place for a long period when women were regarded as objects of hatred for men. Even sons hated their mothers. There was no provision for divorce. The only way of separating from the husband was adultery or apostasy.

3.2.4 Women in Iranian Civilisation

The Iranian society was the victim of great confusion as far as the status of women was concerned. On one hand, there was a hedonist thinker, Mizdak who declared that every woman is a property of every man, in the context of conjugal relations. This thought had terribly affected even the dignified relations such as that of a mother, sister and daughter. Women became equivalent to material wealth. This had a dreadful

consequence on the Iranian society. The sanctity of family relationships was lost and indiscriminate sexual relations got a fillip. As a reaction to this, the thinking of another philosopher, Mani got ground. He went to the extent of casting aspersions on the legitimate relationship between husband and wife. These were two extremes. While Mazdak's views went against the dignity of human relationships, Mani's views went counter to the laws of nature.

3.2.5 Women in Greek and Roman Civilisation

Women were bought and sold in Greece. The dowry system also has its origin there. One man could legally marry just one woman, but there was no restriction on illegitimate liaisons. Women had the right to divorce. That is why there were large incidences of divorce. According to Prof. Leki, the historian of European culture, there was such rampant obscenity prevalent in the society that the courtesans were the most glamorous class there. National leaders and celebrities were attached to them.

The Roman culture was born out of the Greek culture which was the prototype of European culture. Women were considered to be the property of the father before their marriage and of the husband after their marriage. The dowry brought by the wife was also considered the husband's property. Divorce was forbidden. Some people say that no one had heard about the word "divorce' for more than five hundred years. Obscenity was rampant, and prostitutes were accorded high status. There was strong reaction against this extreme licentiousness, and abstinence from sex began to be pursued as a coveted ideal. Some remained single throughout their life. Leki recorded that the lady named Elopishia did not allow her husband to have sex with her in her whole life.

3.2.6 Women in Arabian Sub-Continent before Islam

The land from where the sun of Islam rose, fares even worse. Girls were buried alive there. Wives were regarded as the property of their husbands. They had no right to property.

When Owais bin Sabit (R.A) died he left a widow with children, but his cousins acquired all his property. It was on that occasion that the Quranic verses on inheritance were revealed. Multiple marriages were common. There was no upper limit to the number of wives. When Hazrat Ghailan bin Salma embraced Islam he had 10 wives. There was also no law instructing equal treatment of all the wives. The honour of women was so low that one woman could have several husbands. Men also swapped wives. There was no limit to the number of divorces. Even after divorce, the man had the right to claim back his wife. As long as the husband did not agree, the wife could not separate from him.

3.3 WOMEN IN ISLAM

These were the conditions in which women lived at the time of the advent of the Prophetﷺ into the world. The Prophetﷺ of Islam accorded a status of honour to women, guaranteed their rights and established such social laws that gave full respect to their self and their status in society. Before we deal with these rights that Islam has ensured women, we must know what the Quran says about it. It is said in the Quran:

> *Men are the protectors And maintainers of women, Because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means [Nisa: 3].*

3.3.1 Men are the Mainstay (Qawam)

This means that men are the pillars of society. It is clear from this assertion that men have been given a higher status than women. But if we look closely we will find that this has increased men's responsibilities. Men have been told that it is their responsibility to run the family and look after their wives and children. They have to work hard to maintain the comfort of everyone in the family. In case of any untoward happenings, they have to exercise patience and perseverance. Some people think that the above verse accords an increase in status to men. But I think that if one reflects on the implications of the word "Qawam", he would realize that though ostensibly the Quran has

accorded a higher status to men, in reality it has increased the responsibility of men and saved women from the task of hard labour.

3.3.2 Justice – not Equality

People generally think that Islam has ordained equality between men and women. This is not correct. Islam has ordained "Justice". Justice does not mean equality, but to give each according to his / her need. Men and women, by their very nature, have different potentials. It is not wise to talk about equality in a mechanical way without taking into account this difference in their make-up. This is also true about different classes and groups of people in society. Men, women, children, youth, adults, old people, the educated, the uneducated, the rich and the poor – all have different potentials and roles. If you give the same responsibility to all of them, it will be against nature. That is why the Prophetﷺ of Islam has ordained justice between men and women, and not equality.

3.3.3. Men and Women Possess the Same Soul

During the Prophet'sﷺ life, thinkers and intellectuals fiercely debated the question whether men and women possessed the same soul. Some Greek philosophers held the view that women possessed a soul that was inferior to that of man's and superior to animals. That is, women were considered another group of beings with souls inferior to men. The Quran refuted this view and declared that men and women were created from the same source:

> *O mankind! Fear Your Guardian Lord Who created you From a single person And from him He created his mate [Nisa:1].*

That is, the first woman was created from the body of the man. So, the same soul inhabits both men and women.

3.3.4 Men and Women – Friends, not Adversaries

The above verse points to an important issue. Nowadays, throughout the world, men and women are regarded as two groups of adversaries. In every country organizations are being formed to safeguard the rights of

women. The West is instrumental in giving an impetus to such activities. Even men are forming such organizations in several places. This trend has made two groups of human beings, mutual adversaries. The Quran did not advocate this view and said:

A*nd from him He created his mate [Nisa:1]*

i.e., Allah has created man's companion from his own body. In other words, woman is a part of man. Men and women complement each other. They are not adversaries but friends. When human beings consider someone their rival, they adopt an attitude of hatred and hostility towards that person. But if they consider someone their own part, they love that person and make sacrifices for him.

3.3.5 Woman is not the Source of Sin

At the time of the advent of the Prophetﷺ the concept that the woman is the source of sin, was very common. This belief was prevalent in Indo-China. Among the Israelis, this concept had the status of religious belief. This is because in the Torah, Hazrat Hawwa (A.S) was declared the sole sinner for eating the forbidden fruit in paradise. The concept of "penance" is based on the belief that the sin transmitted through generations is expiated by Christ having been crucified on the cross. Islam wiped out this blot on women from history. It said:

Thus did Adam disobey His Lord, and fell into error [Taha:122)

In this verse, the Quran pointed to Hazrat Adam (A.S) for the error, and not to Hazrat Hawwa (A.S). Actually, both of them were parties to the error. As the Quran says:

Then did Satan make them slip [Baqarah: 36].

And both Adam (A.S) and Eve (A.S) were expelled from paradise. But the Quran held Hazrat (A.S) Adam more responsible, as he was a man. It was a great corrective to the traditional ways of thinking about women.

3.3.6 Woman has an Independent Personality

Gentlemen, these were the views of Islam regarding women. Now we come to the question of women's rights under Islam. The most important thing is that Islam has recognized the independent existence of women. They are not simply an appendage to men but have their independent personalities:

If any do deeds Of righteousness Be they male or female [Nisa:124].

3.3.7 Ownership and the Right to Expenditure

Women have the right to own property and spend it the way they like. They pay Zakat out of their own property. This is recognition of their ownership status. They inherit the property of their relatives. Even her husband does not have the right to spend her money without her permission. Allah says:

But if they remit any part of it to you, Take it and enjoy it. With right good cheer [Nisa: 4].

i.e., if women, of their own volition, permit it, you can use some part of the Mehr (dower).

3.3.8 Right to Criticism

Like men, women also have the right to criticize. Hazrat Ayesha's (R.A) opposition to Hazrat Ali (R.A) and demanding retaliation for the killers of Hazrat Usman (R.A) is a proof of this.

Seeing people demanding exorbitant amounts as Mehr, Hazrat Umar Faruq (R.A), during his Caliphate, intended to fix the maximum limit for Mehr (dower). At this, a woman reprimanded him in public saying that when the Quran allowed any amount to be given as Mehr, he (R.A) had no right to fix any limit. Hazrat Umar (R.A) had a great sense of justice and extraordinary commitment to Allah's instructions. He admitted his error and said:

"A man committed a mistake and a woman proved right in this case."

3.3.9 Right to attend Mosque Assembly

The Prophetﷺ also gave women the right to assemble in the Mosque. They had appealed to him: "Men have got the privilege to assemble in your gatherings and benefit from them. We should also have a similar opportunity." Heﷺ fixed one day per week for them, when they assembled and heﷺ addressed them. Women asked questions and they were answered. This indicates that women have the right to assemble for a good cause while they remain within the limits imposed by the Islamic law.

3.3.10 Women Going to Masjid

However, Islam does not encourage free mixing of men and women because that often opens the floodgates for troubles. Nowadays, some people are encouraging the gathering of women in Masjids. They blame the Ullema for not supporting this move. Some English newspapers and our national media are also raking up this issue. The question is – what is the purpose of coming to the masjid? Obviously, for prayers and meditation. The Prophetﷺ said that for women, performing Salah in the house is better than doing it in the masjid. That is, they would earn greater merit if they pray in their own houses. When the real object of praying is to earn merit, why not earn greater merit by offering it in the house rather than the masjid? Then it should also be noted what kind of atmosphere prevailed during the days of the Prophetﷺ. Women usually participated in the Salah of Maghrib, Esha and Fajr. Because of darkness, a kind of natural Purdah could be maintained. Women came last and stood in the last rows. After the Salah, they would leave first. For rising from Sajda (prostration) the instruction was that women should not lift their head till the men had stood up. Women used baggy veils so that the contours of their body could not be seen. The dresses they wore were simple, so that they did not draw the attention of men.

Moreover, the times were good. Everyone came to the masjid. It was not like the modern times when you find Road Romeos in every street and every place. There was severe punishment for fornication. Because of

the Prophet'sﷺ presence a transformation had taken place in people's behaviour. There was no great time-lag between the times of Hazrat Ayesha (R.A) and the Prophetﷺ. Even then she used to say that if the Prophetﷺ had seen the behaviour of women of her time, heﷺ would not have allowed them to come to the masjid. Just imagine, if Hazrat Ayesha (R.A) had seen today's women what she would have said!

The protest from women's organizations would have been valid if men had been given the privilege of not attending the masjid. We would have been grateful in that case. It would have been more reasonable if men had protested against granting women the privilege of not attending the masjid. It is more convenient to offer one's Salah at home, because going to the masjid does involve some amount of physical labour and inconvenience. Our mothers and sisters should be grateful to Allah and the Prophetﷺ for having spared them this inconvenience!

3.3.11 Right to Marry

The Prophetﷺ of Islam has also guaranteed the personal freedom of women. In many religions, there is no concept of taking the permission from women. But heﷺ instructed that the permission from the girl must be obtained before her marriage. A girl's father had married her off without taking her permission. When she brought her case before the Prophetﷺ, he annulled the marriage. Recently our national leader, Atal Behari Vajpayee said that he admired this Islamic concept of taking the girl's permission before her marriage.

From an Islamic perspective, a Muslim girl can arrange her own marriage. That is why at different places in the Quran, women were accorded primacy in the matters of marriage.

> *Do not prevent them from marrying their (former) husband [Baqarah:232].*

> It is said at another place:

> *He cannot, after that (3 divorces) remarry her until after she has married another husband [Baqarah:230]*

The Prophetﷺ himself had married Umme Salma directly. She had no guardians. If the girl arranges her own marriage according to the norms of the family, the guardians have no right to object. However, it is desirable that the girls should not dismiss the greater experience and wisdom of their elders while deciding about such an important issue of their lives. It is quite possible that young women would make their decisions not on the basis of considered judgement but on the basis of momentary emotions. That is why the Prophetﷺ advised that girls should decide about their marriage through their guardians.

3.3.12 Security of Life

Islam has guaranteed security of a woman's life just as it had guaranteed security of a man's life. According to the Law of Retaliation, if a man kills a woman, that man must be punished with death. It can be said that Islam has provided greater security to the lives of women because participating in wars and protecting the borders of the land are man's responsibilities, and not of women. Islam has prohibited the men from raising their hands against the women of the enemies. God forbid, if a man becomes an apostate, the punishment is death. However if a woman becomes an apostate, her punishment is mere imprisonment so that she gets a chance to do penance.

Yes, the compensation for the life of a woman is half of that of man. This is not because Islam considers a woman's life less precious than that of man, but because men are the principal bread winners for the family on whom the sustenance of a large number of family members depends. The woman is the mistress of the family, but the death of a man robs a whole family of its means of income. That is why the compensation for a man is higher than that of a woman, so that a distressed family is provided with some support.

3.3.13 Maintaining Woman's Honour

Islam has given utmost importance and attention to the protection of a woman's honour. Allegations of bad character against a pure woman are a heinous crime in the eyes of the Quran. Such a person will be served

80 lashes. Stringent laws were made for judging rape cases so that bad characters did not dare violate the modesty of women. The husband has been made fully responsible to protect the wife's life. The Prophet ﷺ said:

> *"If a person dies trying to protect the life or honour of his wife, he will be considered a martyr."*

3.3.14 Right of Refuge (Amaan) for Women

There is a law of 'Amaan' in Islam. 'Amaan' means to give refuge or extend protection to someone. The Prophet ﷺ had given this right to offer protection to a member of the enemy. Once such protection is offered to a person, no one could attack him. In times of peace also, if a non- Muslim is offered such protection, he obtains the right to enter a Muslim country. Like men, this provision is also enjoyed by women. On the occasion of the victory over Makkah Hazrat Ali's (R.A) sister, Hazrat Umme Hani (R.A) had offered protection to a member of her in-laws' family. When Hazrat Ali (R.A.) refused to honour it, the case was brought before the Prophet ﷺ. He ﷺ accepted the validity of the law of protection and said, "The one whom you gave protection, I offer my protection to him." What sagacity and what generosity to women!

3.3.15 Women and Religious Education

Education is the ornament of humanity. The greatness and nobility of human beings depends on it. The first verse revealed to the Prophet ﷺ speaks of education. The Prophet ﷺ has recommended education even for slave women. From this one can guess how much importance he ﷺ gave to the education of girls and boys in the family.

It is for this reason that women have played a seminal role in the realm of education in Islam. Hazrat Ayesha (R.A.) is one among the seven Muhaddisat (teacher of Hadith) who had recorded more than 1000 Ahadith. The total number attributed to her is 2210. Hazrat Hafsa (R.A) and Hazrat Umme Salma (R.A) had also recorded a large number of Ahadith. They are counted among the jurists (Fuqha). Hazrat Ayesha's

(R.A) scholarly credentials were so impeccable that she used to scrutinize the observations and views of the great Companions. For instance when she got to know about the alleged tradition that there were three inauspicious things: women, carriage and house, she refuted this and explained that the Prophetﷺ was quoting a proverb prevalent among the Jews and Christians. He was quoting it when the "Rawi" (narrator) arrived on the spot and thought that it was the Prophet'sﷺ remark. Just think if Hazrat Ayesha (R.A) had not rectified this error, it would have been alleged that like other religions, Islam too has an inferior view of women. There are many such instances where scholars have recognized her firm knowledge of many matters.

In Islamic jurisprudence also, Hazrat Ayesha (R.A) is counted among those who gave maximum number of Fatwas. Among those who gave a few Fatwas are Hazrat Hafsa (R.A) and Hazrat Umme Atiya (R.A). Islamic scholars have the view that women can become muftis and carry out the responsibility of declaring Fatwas.

3.3.16 Women and Other Branches of Knowledge

Apart from religious education, women are free to pursue other branches of knowledge as well, that agree with their natural capabilities. Among the Sahabias, Shafa Adwiya knew Calligraphy. At the Prophet'sﷺ instance, she taught this art to Hazrat Hafsa (R.A). The traditions that prohibit women to learn Calligraphy are wrong.

The Prophetﷺ also encouraged women to run cottage industry and handlooms. Heﷺ advised women to do embroidery. Hazrat Zainab (R.A), wife of Hazrat Abdullah bin Masood (R.A), maintained her family with this. Some women were known to manufacture knives. One big advantage of such cottage industry is that women remain engaged in work, sparing them little time for gossip and scandal mongering.

It is also necessary for women to acquire medical education so that women doctors can treat women without exposing themselves to the male gaze. Hazrat Ayesha (R.A) also knew much about treatment of diseases. When the Prophetﷺ was on his death bed, doctors from

different parts of the Arab world came for his treatment. Hazrat Ayesha (R.A) remembered their prescriptions. From books of traditions and the Prophet's ﷺ biography we come to know that women treated wounded warriors in times of war and dressed their wounds. This could be possible only when they possessed some preliminary knowledge.

3.3.17 Women and Jobs

In principle, Islam wants women to stay at home, free from the grind of earning a livelihood. For me, this is for the greater good of the society. Relationships in reality thrive in an atmosphere of mutual dependence. The husband depends on the wife for the upbringing of the children and the wife depends on the husband for the necessities of life. If this dependence is reduced on anyone's part, the relationship loses its solidity. If the husband does not depend on the wife for the children's upbringing, then the importance of the wife in his life will be reduced. In the western countries, there are centres where children are looked after. This has weakened the strength of the marriage bond. Similarly, if the wife begins to earn her livelihood, she starts considering her husband as a burden. This reduces compatibility between them. The wife does not feel the need of the husband and the husband does not feel the need of the wife. This makes the conjugal relationship fluid and undependable. People begin to consider marriage as a kind of trap, and those who do marry resort to divorce on flimsy grounds. Thus, in America, according to a recent census, 70 percent of the marriages end in divorce!

Under certain circumstances, it may be necessary for women to take up jobs and there is provision in the Islamic law for that. However, this provision can be used only when women remain within the bounds of the law:

- Initially, they should seek permission of their guardians; if the woman is unmarried, she should take permission from her father, if married, then from the husband.

- Secondly, the environment should not have free mixing. Islam does not allow women to work in such an environment, which is harmful to them. It becomes difficult for women to maintain their dignity and honour, and this breeds tension in the minds of good women. The Prophet ﷺ said that whenever a man and woman come together, the devil tempts them.
- Thirdly, when they leave the house they should avoid make-up etc. which would attract undue attention from the opposite sex. Being simple in dress at home and making them attractive while going out, should be avoided, as that would encourage evil people to take advantage of them.

3.3.18 Purdah – Not a Prison

The fourth instruction for women, (for their own safety) is that whenever they wish to go out they should do so in Purdah. They should wear a dress that covers the entire body including the face. Nowadays some people consider Purdah to be oppressive. They say that women are imprisoned in the veil. This is entirely wrong. It is a conspiracy of wicked people who want to bring women to the market and thus humiliate them. Actually, Purdah is no imprisonment but a means of security against wicked and wayward people. You will find that there is greater oppression against women in societies where women do not observe Purdah.

Some people think that it will be a mere farce if women are subjected to so many restrictions when they take up jobs, and in practice they will be deprived of jobs. This is not correct. In countries where Islamic rule will be adopted, opportunities of work for women will increase. For girls, such educational institutions will be established where teachers and lecturers will be women. Such hospitals and clinics will have to be established where the entire staff will be women. It is clear that under such circumstances, opportunities for needy women will increase. A problem has to be understood in its proper context. The misunderstanding about Islam is accentuated because of this failure to understand the whole context.

3.4 DAUGHTER – IN THE EYES OF THE PROPHET

These were the general rights of women. The real issue is about their rights in the social and family life, because women are the very foundation of family life.

In the family a woman normally passes through three phases. First she is a daughter, then wife and then mother. Before the advent of Islam, daughters were buried alive in Arabia. That is why the Prophet ﷺ specially underlined the merit of birth of a daughter and her upbringing. He said:

> *"If someone has two daughters and he brings them up properly, giving no preference to sons, then in Paradise he will be very close to me"*

The love and affection the Prophet ﷺ had for his daughters has no parallel. When Hazrat Fatima (R.A) visited him, he ﷺ would get up, kiss her forehead and seat her in his own seat. When he ﷺ went to visit Fatima (R.A), she did the same. When he ﷺ went out of Madinah, his last meeting would be with Fatima (R.A). On return, after visiting the masjid, he ﷺ would go to Fatima (R.A)'s place.

The Prophet ﷺ held the father responsible for the education and upbringing of the daughter. When the son grows up and begins to earn, the father can be free of his responsibility towards him, but even after the daughter comes of age, the responsibility of her maintenance rests with the father, till she is married. After marriage, if she is divorced or becomes a widow, even then her maintenance is vested with the father. The parents are also responsible for finding a suitable boy and getting the daughter married. Islam has given the daughters right to the parents' and relatives' property like that of the sons.

3.5 WHY IS A WOMAN'S SHARE LESS THAN THAT OF MAN?

It is true that the share of daughters in the property is half compared to that of sons. This is also true about the shares of mothers, sisters and wives in comparison with the shares of fathers, brothers and husbands

respectively. In many cases the share of women is half to that of men. Some object to it and say that this is discrimination against women, based solely on the grounds of gender. But if you place it in the context of the Islamic system, you will find that this provision is the most proper and advisable. The Islamic law has vested all economic responsibilities in man, viz., his own expenses, expenses of his wife, expenses for children's education etc. for marriage, maintaining old parents, widowed sisters and their children etc. No economic responsibility is vested in the women. Keeping this in mind it seems reasonable that man inherits two times that of the woman. It would still seem reasonable if he had inherited several times more than the woman. The Islamic law has taken full cognizance of women's physical weakness, lack of opportunity to earn money, her delicacy, and freed her of all economic responsibilities. That it has made provision for women's inheritance in property is a unique gesture of generosity towards women. The difference in their share is not due to any gender discrimination but because of their differing responsibilities.

3.6 A LOOK AT THE WIFE'S RIGHTS

The Prophet ﷺ exhorted people time and again to treat their wives with love and affection. Even in his last address, "Hujjatul Vidah" there is mention of this. During his last illness he ﷺ drew attention to it in his many instructions. He ﷺ said:

> *"The best among you is the one who behaves well and treats his wife nicely."*

He ﷺ further said:

> *" Among all of you I am the foremost who treats his near and dear ones well".*

He ﷺ made the husband responsible for the comforts of the wife. To take someone else's personal belonging without his permission is not allowed at all. However, the wife has been allowed to take her husband's possessions according to her needs, if the husband turns out

to be too miserly. Hinda, Hazrat Abu Sufian's wife came to the Prophetﷺ and complained about her husband's miserliness and asked if was allowed to use her husband's wealth without his permission. The Prophetﷺ said:

> *"Take only as much as is needed for you and your children".*

A wife is allowed to meet a permissible number of people. If her parents live in the same town, she can go to see them once a week without the permission of the husband. The Shariah has also made allowances for her biological needs. Before Islam, people would sometimes take a vow not to have sex with the wife. The Prophetﷺ strictly forbade it and laid the stipulation that if a husband vows not to have sex with the wife for four months and does not have any interaction with her, this will lead to annulment of the marriage. It is called "Ila" in the idiom of Islamic jurisprudence.

People behaved nastily with their wives, cursed and abused them. All these have been strictly forbidden in Islam. It was further stipulated that if a husband abuses his wife wrongly, he cannot go to her unless he pays penance. The penance is to keep fast for sixty days; if one cannot keep fast then one has to feed sixty destitute.

3.6.1 Instruction for Good Behaviour

The Quran and the Ahadith provide a comprehensive framework of good behaviour with the wife:

> *On the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness (معروف) and equity [Nisa:19].*

"Maroof" means good behaviour. This includes everything that is necessary for the well-being of life, viz., food, dresses, ways of address, conversion, behaviour with her relatives, honouring her feelings, etc. The rights that the jurists have accorded to the wife are in the light of instructions in the Quran and the Ahadith. The husband is even expected to employ servants for the wife if he can afford it. Imam Abu Hanifa

went to the extent of saying that there should be two servants; one to help inside the house and another to run errands outside the house.

The Prophet's ﷺ relationship with his wives was very warm, affectionate and informal. Even if they talked back occasionally, he ﷺ would not mind. The informality that marked his treatment of his wives can be gauged from the following Hadith:

> *Once he ﷺ said to Ayesha (R.A),"I get to know when you are happy with me from your gestures, and also when you are angry with me. When you are angry, you swear by saying, 'by the God of Abraham!' and when you are happy you exclaim, 'by the God of Muhammad!'. Hazrat Ayesha laughed and said, "This is limited to verbal expression only; otherwise in my heart your love overwhelms everything else."*

This demonstrates how affectionate he ﷺ was to his wives.

Just consider this: he ﷺ was the Prophet ﷺ, the ruler of the whole Arab Peninsula. Delegations from different states and countries came to visit him, civil and criminal cases were settled, booties etc. were distributed, and celebratory assemblies were held. All these required his ﷺ presence. His ﷺ basic status was that of a teacher of humanity.

> *And instructing them in scripture and wisdom [Al -Imran: 164].*

He ﷺ was discharging his duties daily, divine revelations were taking place, the Quranic verses were being collected and put together. From time to time he ﷺ also had to engage in Jihad. Yet, despite all these engagements, he ﷺ never ignored his familial duties. After the Salah of Asr he ﷺ would visit his wives to enquire about their needs. From Maghrib to the hour of Esha he ﷺ would spend time at the place of the wife who had the turn on that day. Other wives would also gather there and he ﷺ would offer religious discourse, instructions, or simply talk with them.

When Hazrat Ayesha (R.A) was married, she was very young. He ﷺ was so affectionate to her that he ﷺ lifted her on his arms so that she could

witness the game of slaves and held her in that position till she was tired. When he ﷺ married Umme Salma (R.A), she had several orphan children. He ﷺ was so kind to them that they did not feel the lack of a father; neither did Umme Salma (R.A) feel that they were a burden. The fact is that it is easy for the wealthy husbands to load their wives with ornaments and dresses. But the real test for the husband lies in being able to cater to their emotional and other needs despite their own busy life.

3.6.2 Right of Inheritance and Custody

The Shariah has accorded the wife the right in the property of her husband. No one can deprive her of this right. If the husband and wife are separated, the most important issue is that of children. The Prophet ﷺ, in consideration of other's feelings, preferred mothers for the custody of the children.

During the Caliphate of Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.A), Hazrat Umar, (R.A) had brought a case. Hazrat Umar (R.A) had divorced one of his wives who hailed from the Quba area. The children were with her. One day Hazrat Umar (R.A) chanced upon his son and brought him. The mother complained to Abu Bakr (R.A). Hazrat Umar, (R.A) was sent for and the case was decided against him. On that occasion Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.A) had said, "For the children, the mother's spit is better than your honey."

Therefore, as long as the daughter does not come of age, she will stay with the mother. As for sons, they should stay with the mother till they are 7 or 8 years old. After this they will go to stay with the father, keeping in mind their need for education and upbringing. But their relationship with their mother will remain intact. The children will be allowed to meet their mother, and she will have the right to meet them.

3.6.3 Permission for Multiple Marriages

Gentlemen, many people object to the laws of marriage in Islam, and the fact that the Prophet ﷺ has permitted men to marry more than one

wife, four to the maximum, at a time. They think that it is injustice to women. It is true that Islam has allowed multiple marriages. Both the Quran and the Ahadith corroborate this The Prophetﷺ himself married more than once. But if you look at it from the point of justice and practical needs, you will realize that it is not one of the drawbacks of Islam but its merit. This provision makes allowances for human nature and human needs.

First it has to be kept in mind that there is hardly any religion in the world that has not allowed multiple marriages. If you read the sacred books of Jews and Christians, you will find that Hazrat Moosa (Moses), Hazrat Dawood (David) Hazrat Sulaiman (Solomon) all had multiple wives. In Hinduism also, multiple wives were common. Thus, Islam should not be singled out in this regard.

In Arabia, multiple marriages were the order of the day. There was no limit to the number of wives. There were many people who had, when they embraced Islam, as many as ten wives. Islam, though it allowed multiple marriages, restricted the number to four. At the same time, it put in place some clear conditions for polygamy. The most important thing is that only that person is allowed to have more than one wife who has the capacity to maintain them, to treat them in the proper way and to guard their conjugal rights. He should be sure of the fact that after marriage he can do justice to them all without any discrimination. If he cannot do that, then he is not allowed to have more than one wife.

The Prophetﷺ stressed equal treatment of all the wives and set the example by doing it in his own practical life. Heﷺ said, “One who does not do justice to all his wives will be raised on the Day of Judgment with a part of his body paralyzed.”

Thirdly, multiple marriages for men often become a social necessity. For instance, in war men die in large numbers. They also do many dangerous tasks risking their lives. It is for this reason that the proportion of men in society falls far below that of women. After World War I & II, the proportion of men and women in many countries was

disturbed. In Germany, the number of men was just one third of women. Under such circumstances, if polygamy is not allowed, where will all these women go? Thus, in specific circumstances, polygamy is in the interest of women.

Sometimes women may be permanently invalid; sometimes a man may be so attracted to another woman that he is not ready to give her up. In these circumstances, if the second marriage is not allowed, he will leave his first wife for no valid reason rendering her helpless. Thus, though apparently polygamy may seem harmful to women, in reality it is a kind of blessing.

One undeniable reality of history is that wherever polygamy was banned, people began to maintain mistresses and it went to the most shameful extremes. The cultural history of Iran and ancient Greece is witness to this fact. The same is truer about contemporary western culture. A famous French researcher has admitted, "The provision of legal wives in Islam is much better than illegal mistresses in the West." This is a fact that wherever free-mixing and sexual license is practiced, women remain at the receiving end. Thus, polygamy is not a curse but a blessing for human nature and on many occasions, for women.

3.6.4 Right of Talaq (Divorce) to Men

Another objection that some people raise is that Islam has given men the right of unilateral divorce, something that adds to men's dominance. Women have to spend their lives under the shadow of the threat of divorce. If we reflect on this issue cool-headedly, we will realize that the provision for divorce is necessary for social life, and for safe-guarding the honour of women.

> There is no denying that Islam has allowed divorce, but it has allowed it only as the last resort. The Prophet ﷺ said that among all the things that are permissible to human beings, divorce is the most hated thing to him.
>
> He ﷺ said:

> *"When someone divorces his wife, the throne of Allah trembles".*

Heﷺ further said:

> *"The devil derives the maximum pleasure when there is a discord between husband and wife."*

The Quran stipulates several stages before the divorce. The first stage is that of advice and persuasion. If this does not work, then there should be temporary "alienation" between the husband and the wife. This "alienation" means that the wife should stay in the house, should not be even turned out of the bedroom that will humiliate her in the eyes of others. It only means that they should not have any physical relations with each other.

If this also does not work, then the next stage is that of mild reprimand. However, it is necessary that the reprimand should not go beyond the limits of Shariah. The Prophetﷺ instructions make it clear that women should not be struck on the face, or the delicate parts of the body; they should not be beaten in a way so that they are injured, that leaves marks on the body or that breaks bones. Some jurists hold the view that it is just a Miswak (wooden tooth brush) that can be used to beat with. I feel that the object is not to beat them but give them the impression that they have been beaten. And this is permissible only when the woman has done something really reprehensible e.g. she has abused the husband, has not taken bath when it was necessary, meets or talks to such men not allowed by Shariah, does not answer to the needs of the husband for no valid reason. It is not allowed that she be beaten for not serving the husband and his family members to their satisfaction, for not cooking tasty food etc.

Finally, the Prophetﷺ said:

> *"Though you are allowed to beat your wives if needed, the decent ones among you will not do this, only bad people raise their hands against women."*

If all the above measures do not work, the Quran stipulates that one reliable person each from the husband's family and the wife's family should meet to arbitrate. They will listen to the complaints from both the parties and try to solve the problem. If this also proven futile and the woman still continues to be disobedient, then Talaq should be resorted to.

Talaq should be given in three different stages. In the first stage the husband, wife in a state of purity, (when he has not had sex with his wife) will utter the word 'Talaq'. This is called as Talaq-e-Rajai (Revocable) and there will be a scope for re-thinking during the period of "iddat" (Probation). During this period they can reconcile without a fresh marriage. If the divorce is irrevocable then a fresh marriage is required after probation.

However, if after the first Talaq the status remains without any scope for reconciliation, then the husband, in a state of purity (of wife), can utter the word 'Talaq' a second time. This time also the husband will have the opportunity to reconcile during probation or re-marry after the end of probation. However, if there is no change in the attitude of the wife, then all the means adopted before the first Talaq shall be re-employed; persuasion, 'alienation' for a few days, reprimand, arbitration by guardians from both sides etc. Again, if all means prove futile then the husband, after consulting the Ullema and scholars can give the third Talaq. After this the relationship between the husband and wife finally comes to an end.

However, practically, three divorces are not required when only one divorce is sufficient for the departure from the wife. If people do not pay adequate attention to all the above stages and give three Talaqs promptly, they misuse this provision of Shariah. It is they who are to be blamed and not the Shariah.

3.6.5 Divorce: a Means to Protect the Life and Honour of Women

Gentlemen, the laws of divorce, in fact, have become the means to protect the life and honour of women. If a husband develops hatred for

his wife, and there is no legal way of getting rid of her, he will try illegal, even criminal means, and this will put at risk the life of the woman. In our country, murder has become easier than theft or rape. Even if the Prime Minister is assassinated, the legal process takes years to get completed. In these circumstances, if the husband kills his wife in the solitude of his house, who can prevent it? In such a situation, divorce becomes a means of saving the life of the wife. Among the Hindus, even though they are more educated than the Muslims, you will find that cases of burning or killing wives are common. Data reveal that a bride is burnt every 12 hours. Despite their poverty and illiteracy, Muslims are still better off in this regard. Such instances are very few among the Muslims. This can be attributed to the provision of Talaq.

Talaq is also a means to protect the honour of a woman. Wherever divorce is affected by the court, the husband has to stand in the court and publicly accuse his wife of a crime that would provide justification for the divorce. The easiest thing for the husband is to cast aspersions on the character of the wife. In every decent society, particularly in the oriental society, if a woman's character is suspected, even if the suspicion is false, it deprives her of a decent life in her community. In reality the woman may not have committed any of the crimes she is being accused of. Islam, by giving the provision of Talaq to the husband, has saved women from this indignity.

Further, it isn't as if Islam has given husbands the right to divorce and left women without any means of getting release from release from an unwanted union. Islam has also made provision for "Khula" which means if the wife does not like the husband for some reason, she can persuade him, by freeing him from the obligation of paying back the dower or giving him something else, to divorce her.

If there is a strong discord between the husband and the wife, and the Qazi feels convinced that they cannot live together, then he can exercise his rights and compel the husband to divorce his wife. A Companion named Hazrat Sabit (R.A) had brought such a case before the Prophet ﷺ. He ﷺ asked his wife to return the orchard given as dower to her and

asked Hazrat Sabit (R.A) to give her divorce. That is why the well-known jurist, Imam Malik stipulates that if it is not possible to rectify the relationship between the husband and wife he can compel them to agree for "Khula". If there is injustice on the part of the husband, if he cannot fulfil any right of the wife, or cannot fulfil any of her conjugal needs, the wife can present her case before the Qazi. After proper investigation, he can annul the marriage. All these principles emanate from the statements of the Prophetﷺ.

Gentlemen, in point of fact, the provision of divorce in Islam is a blessing for women. In Hinduism and Christianity, there was no concept of divorce, and marriage often turned into a trap from which there was no escape. Islam showed the way in this matter, and legal systems in the East and the West have borrowed the principles of the Islamic systems. It is regrettable that rather than recognizing its great social utility, some people love to criticize and malign it.

3.7 THE STATUS OF MOTHER IN THE PROPHET'Sﷺ EYES

Among the different roles that women play in society, the role of the mother is the noblest. The status accorded by the Prophetﷺ to the mother is indeed very high. Just as heﷺ has given precedence to the upbringing of daughters, and rights of wives over those of husbands, in the same way heﷺ has accorded prominence to the rights of the mother over those of the father. Heﷺ said that:

> *"Paradise lies beneath the feet of the mother. About the father, heﷺ said that he is the door of paradise".*

A Companion had asked:

> *"Who is the most deserving of the best behaviour from me?" The Prophetﷺ repeated "mother" three times and then mentioned "father" the fourth time.*

Thus everyone should try to serve his parents to the best of his ability. However, if he is not in a position to serve both, he should give precedence to the mother.

He ﷺ was so respectful to the right of the mother that when a Companion embraced Islam his mother asked, "What's your Prophet's ﷺ view about the status of the mother?" The Companion replied' "He instructs us to have the best behaviour with the mother." At this, the mother refused to eat or drink anything and told the son that she would continue her hunger strike till he (her son) rejected this new faith. Upset, the Companion came to the Prophet ﷺ and explained his problem. The Prophet ﷺ said:

> *"It is necessary to retain your faith and to preserve your mother's life too"*

So, the Companion would feed his mother forcefully and put up with her curses too.

3.7.1 Obedience and Devotion

Not only are there strict instructions about looking after the mother, but obedience to her is also necessary so long as she does not order anything opposed to Shariah. The Prophet ﷺ said that:

> *"Even if your parents are unjust with you, you still have to behave well with them".*

Obedience to parents or anyone else is desirable only as long as their orders remain within the purview of Shariah. The order of the created beings cannot be allowed to override the orders of the Creator. For instance, to demand money for "Tilak", horse-carriage, etc. during marriage or to demand non-Islamic rituals etc. is not permitted. If the parents insist on these, obedience to them is not necessary. If the mother wants her son to divorce his wife without complying with the Shariah, then it is not permitted. These are unjust demands and should not be accepted. One should try to explain to one's parents gently so that they are persuaded not to make such unjust demands. Parents, on their part, should not make any such demands that their children are compelled to refuse.

3.7.2 Share in Inheritance

Just as the Shariah has made the daughter and the wife the rightful successors, in the same way, it has also made mothers successors of their children if they (children) die during their (mothers) lifetime. The mother's share in the property cannot be appropriated by anyone else. Thus, Islam has given a very respectable status to the mother and the Prophetﷺ has shown utmost solicitude for the well-being of the mother.

3.8 CONCLUSION

Gentlemen, if one takes an impartial and objective view of Islamic laws and the teachings of the Prophetﷺ and his own practice in real life, he will admit that the Islamic laws regarding women are the most reasonable and just. They are based on the comparative natural abilities and needs of men and women. They have delimited the areas of activities for men and women in a way that will serve the best interest for the whole family. By going against the laws of nature, the West has torn apart the social system.

Mothers and sisters, Islam is certainly a blessing for you that you cannot find elsewhere. There is honour for you, for your feminine sensibility. It makes allowances for the requirements of your nature at every step and tries to ease your difficulties. Instead of making you an employee in the house and slave in the market place, it has made you the mistress of your home. Don't be duped by the mirage of the glamour that the contemporary age puts before you, because it has no other objective except your exploitation.

3.9 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

3.9.1 Dower on instalments

Q: Can the husband pay the dower in small instalments?

A: Dower can be paid up front or in instalments. This depends on the husband's financial capability and the couple's choice. However, there should not be any delay in paying dower without any valid reason. This

is an obligation on the part of the husband, and he is answerable to Allah for this.

3.9.2 Punishment for Frivolous Talaq

Q: If the husband gives Talaq without sufficient reason, does the Shariah propose any punishment for him?

A: Divorce without reason is a sin and the person can be punished under the Islamic rule. Hazrat Umar (R.A) used to serve lashes to those gave triple Talaq. There are problems in giving the Indian government this right. That is why we are not in favour of it. However, Muslims themselves, at the social level should reprimand such people and exert a pressure on them.

3.9.3 Can the husband be held responsible if the wife doesn't observe Purdah?

Q: If the wife doesn't observe Purdah according to Shariah, will the husband be responsible for it?

A: The Prophet ﷺ said:

> *"All of you are related to some people and responsible and accountable for them".*

So, if the husband does not convince his wife to observe purdah and does not try to change her attitude, he would be answerable to Allah for this. That is why the Prophet ﷺ said that some women will drag four men to hell along with them.

3.9.4 Seeing Strangers

Q: Women are seeing and listening to you from above, though Islam stipulates Purdah for both.

A: There is a difference between the instructions of women seeing strange men and men seeing women. For men, the whole body of women is to be kept in Purdah, whereas the women can see men's body except the part from navel to ankle, provided there is no apprehension of

any misconduct. If there is any apprehension then women should keep their eyes lowered. That is why the Prophet ﷺ allowed Hazrat Ayesha (R.A) to watch the game of black slaves. During the periods of the Prophets and the Caliphs, women used to come to the masjid for Salah. It is clear that on those occasions they could see men.

3.9.5 Women Visiting Idgah

Q: Are women allowed to go to the Idgah?

A: During the Prophet's ﷺ days, women were permitted to go to the Idgah. However, it cannot be allowed in the current circumstances. Those were the good days. Women were decent; men also would keep their eyes downcast. If anyone showed ant moral weakness, they would not have the courage to come before the Prophet ﷺ. The eyes that sinned were not worthy to see the Prophet ﷺ. In the present age of waywardness, we cannot even imagine this. The real objective in ibaadat (worship) is to earn reward. Men would do it by going to Idgah and women can do it by remaining at home. If they go to Idgah and some untoward incident takes place, the religion would be slandered.

3.9.6 Open-eyed Burqah (Veil)

Q: These days women wear Burqa but the eyes remain bare. What is the guideline regarding this?

A: It is better to use Burqah with perforated slits before the eyes, although jurists allow bare eyes, so that women do not feel inconvenience in walking. Actually the matter is one of Purdah. Burqas should be ideally made of coarse material. The designer Burqas that can be seen now do not serve the purpose of Purdah.

3.9.7 Change in Dower

Q: Can the decided quantum of dower be increased or decreased after marriage?

A: If the wife, of her own accord, forgoes a part of the dower, or the husband increases the amount, then it is permissible. If it is done in the

context of the economic condition of the couple, for example if the wife feels that the husband is not rich enough to pay her the entire dower and she forgoes a part of it, then it will be considered an act of generosity.

3.9.8 If the Girl Marries on Her Own

Q: Can a girl marry on her own against the wishes of her elders? If not, then is it not against the principle of equality?

A: As I said in my address, a grown up girl has the right to marry on her own, though it is advisable to take the elders into confidence. It is obvious that the situations of men and women are different. Girls have little opportunity to know the circumstances of boys. That is why the role of guardians is greater for them. This is not because women are unequal but to ensure a safe future for them.

3.9.9 Hazrat Ayesha (R.A) and the Battle of Jamal

Q: In the battle of Jamal, Hazrat Ayesha (R.A) was leading a troupe. From this, can it be deduced that women can be army commanders?

A: In the battle of Jamal, Hazrat Ayesha (R.A) participated neither as a soldier nor as a commander. Her main objective was to demand revenge on the killers of Hazrat Usman (R.A). Moreover, many Companion and the other wives of the Prophet ﷺ did not support Hazrat Ayesha’s step. Later Hazrat Ayesha (R.A) herself realized her mistake in participating in the movement and regretted it. Thus, this event cannot be used to justify women’s participation in the army.

3.9.10 Muslim Women Marrying a Non- Muslim

Q: If a Muslim woman marries a Hindu man and he doesn’t accept Islam, can she live with him?

A: Surely not. The marriage of a Muslim woman is not permissible to any non-Muslim belonging to any religion. So as long as she stays with such a man she will be committing a sin. Such a woman should be persuaded to separate from her husband, or efforts should be made to make him accept Islam and then they should marry again.

3.9.11 Maid or Widow preferred for Marriage?

Q: Who is better – a maid or a widow – for the purpose of marriage?

A: This depends on the individual and social situations. A Companion, Hazrat Jabir bin Abdullah had married a widow. When the Prophet ﷺ came to know of it he ﷺ said:

> *"You should have married a maid." Hazrat Jabir replied, "My father is no more, and I have several sisters. I thought if an aged woman comes to the house she can look after them." Hearing this the Prophet (S.A.) approved of his action.*

But in our country, because of the influence of the Hindu religion, very few widows get married. People do not consider a widow for marriage. In my view, it is better to marry such women in the current circumstances. Moreover, the Prophet's ﷺ wives, except for Hazrat Ayesha (R.A) were all either widows or divorcees. Some had been married more than once before marrying the Prophet ﷺ. Thus, it is probably better to marry such helpless women in this age.

3.9.12 Transactions in Marriage

Q: What is the view of Shariah about transactions and demands in marriage?

A: It is exhorted in the Quran that one should not earn wealth through dubious means. The Quran says:

> *And do not eat up your property among yourselves for vanities*. (Baqarah: 188)

This is one such case. To claim money or goods in marriage, according to the jurists, falls in the category of bribes. It is strictly forbidden (Haram) to take or give such things. If one has already taken them, then he should return them.

3.9.13 Maintenance of Divorcees

Q: In the contemporary society, who should bear the expenses of divorcees?

A: The Islamic view about marriage is that it is a contract. Even after marriage the girl continues to be a part of her parents' family; she does not become the property of her husband. Rather, she has the status of a companion and friend. If her relationship with her husband comes to an end, the responsibility of her maintenance falls on her family – on parents, brothers and such relatives who would inherit her property. The jurists have made elaborate provision for it that can be found in relevant books.

Secondly, maintenance during "Iddat" is obligatory on the husband. If there are children they will be with the mother; boys till the age of 7-8 years, and girls till they come of age. The maintenance of the children and the wife will be the husband's responsibility. The statements of the jurists make it clear that the amount of maintenance should be such as to enable one to live decently. Thus, for a considerable period, the maintenance of the divorced women is guaranteed.

3.9.14 Why do Women have Lesser Status as Witness?

Q: In case of evidence, two women are equal to one man. Why is this discrimination?

A: One obvious reason is that for giving evidence it is necessary that the person must observe the events personally. Women have less scope for this. Secondly, for bearing witness to something it is necessary that the person must first understand it in all its complexity and then preserve it in his memory. This power is found more in men than in women. This is not a defect of women, but appropriate for carrying out their womanly duties. Actually, women have to basically play the role of a wife and mother. These roles require that she should be more emotional. It is found that however tired or distressed she is, the slightest discomfort of her children moves her. However kind the father may be he is deprived

of such feelings that are proof of a woman's overbearingly emotional nature. Excessive emotion clouds one's understanding and judgment. We observe that human beings become emotional when they are angry or grief-stricken. In that state, they find it difficult to understand things in all their complexity and remember them. It is for this reason that women have been given less importance than men in matters of evidence. But, if it is something about which only women can understand or know better, the jurists in such cases have given more importance to women's evidence.

3.9.15 In Aqeeqa, why is there difference between boys and girls?

Q: Why is it that two goats should be sacrificed for a boy's Aqeeqa (name-keeping ceremony) and one for a girl?

A: Well, it is enough to sacrifice one goat even in the Aqeeqa of a boy, though it is better to sacrifice two. It is obligatory for us to obey the instructions of Allah and His Prophet ﷺ without question. It is not necessary that human beings will understand the rationale behind all instructions, though such instructions are never without justification.

Apparently, it seems due to the fact that a boy becomes a source of economic prosperity for humanity. He takes up the responsibility of looking after parents in their old age. That is why his birth calls for a double gratitude to Allah. And one can offer gratitude to Allah by rendering greater service to human beings.

3.9.16 Women- Deficient in Intelligence

Q: Women have been designated as lacking intelligence in Ahadith, though these days women are leaving men behind in education. Isn't it an insult to them?

A: Education consists of gathering information; 'intelligence' is the capacity for thought. One can gather information from books and advance in education. But he/she cannot be called superior in intelligence. Advancement of girls in education cannot be said to be a proof of their greater intelligence. What was really meant in the

Ahadith, I think, is women's capacity to take decisions. Being emotional, they are less capable of taking dispassionate decisions. If you take into account the temperament of women, you will recognize this.

By saying that women lacked intelligence, the Prophet ﷺ did not mean any insult to women; on the contrary, he ﷺ wanted to arouse understanding for them. It is similar to forgiving a child if it commits wrong. The Prophet ﷺ had drawn men's attention to the fact that if women, swept by their emotion, commit any impulsive excess, then it should be ignored, with the understanding that they are not given to cool thinking.

CHAPTER 4
THE PROPHETﷺ OF ISLAM
AND THE WEAKER SECTIONS
Fourth Address-Part I
[6th Zillhijja, 1417H: 14th April 1997]

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Prophetﷺ was the embodiment of blessings. Heﷺ was an embodiment of benevolence and kindness. Friend or enemy; familiar or strange; poor or rich; weak or strong, heﷺ loved all people. But just as a loving father and an affectionate mother love the weakest of their offspring, the poorest or the most disadvantaged of all, similarly, the Prophetﷺ was especially kind to the oppressed, the weakest and the downtrodden. Those who were insulted and humiliated elsewhere were given honour by himﷺ. Those who were considered beneath the notice of other people were paid utmost attention by himﷺ. After 'faith', it was justice that impressed himﷺ the most, and after 'dis-believe', it was oppression / exploitation that heﷺ despised the most."

> *Heﷺ commands them to do good; and forbids them from evil; heﷺ makes lawful for them the good things, and forbids them from the evil things, heﷺ releases them from their heavy burdens and from the fetters that were upon them [Aaraf:157].*

One of the objectives of the apostleship of the Prophet of Islamﷺ was to break the shackles of man-made laws and customs that were used as means of exploitation and oppression of the weak by the mighty. Heﷺ paid special attention to the oppressed people of the society and ameliorated their conditions. Heﷺ was habitually kind and benevolent. Even before his apostleship heﷺ had set up an organization named, "Hulf ul-Fuzool" to help the oppressed and resist the oppressors. When the first divine message was revealed to him and heﷺ returned from the cave of the mountain Hira to his wife Hazrat Khadija (R.A), heﷺ was in a nervous state and looked quite flustered. Hazrat Khadija (R.A), who

knew him ﷺ intimately, reassured him ﷺ of people's support to the divine missions. She (R.A) said:

> *"Certainly, Allah will not humiliate you ﷺ. You ﷺ are always affectionate to people and bear their burden, you ﷺ help the needy when they are in difficulties and are very hospitable to guests."*

He ﷺ always extended help to the oppressed, tried to uplift them and ensure justice for them.

In today's speech, I will allude to some such groups. We have already discussed the Prophet's ﷺ views about the status of women in the earlier speeches; also his ﷺ views about non-Muslims and minorities. Now, I shall discuss how he ﷺ related to some other groups and also to the animal kingdom.

4.2 CONDITION OF SLAVES BEFORE ISLAM

The most oppressed group was that of slaves. When Islam emerged, all nations in the world practiced slavery. In India, an entire community of people were designated as slaves as it was considered their main objective in the world was to serve other castes. They were called "Shudras"; the "Chhatriyas" and "Vaishyas" were their masters. But these castes were also slaves to the Brahmans.

All over the world, the slaves were treated most cruelly. The Roman and the Persian empires were known to be the most civilized at that time. But even in those countries, slaves were compelled to fight with wild animals. Slaves were set to fight with each other and people watched the fight till one of them was killed. It was a popular sport called 'Siafi'. Big stadia were built in Europe for this heart-rending sport.

4.2.1 Honour for Slaves in Islam

The Prophet ﷺ gave this class much honour. Hazrat Bilal (R.A) and Suhaib (R.A) were slaves. But even the senior companions honoured them. When they arrived in the office of Caliph Umar (R.A), he (Hazrat Umar (R.A)) used to address them as "our lord", "our elder" and so on. If there were others waiting to meet the Caliph, they (slaves who

accepted Islam) were given precedence over Arab aristocrats and Quraish chiefs.

It is probably because of hisﷺ kindness to slaves that among those who embraced Islam first most were slaves. Hazrat Zayed bin Haresa, Hazrat Khubab, Hazrat Bilal, Hazrat Ammar and his father Hazrat Yaser, Hazrat Suhaib, Hazrat Salim, Abu Fakhiyah and Amir bin Fuhaira (R.A). Among the women slaves were Hazrat Sumayyah, Hazrat Zarina, Hazrat Labinah, Hazrat Nahdiya etc. Later also, this class played a significant role in the preaching and propagation of Islam.

The Prophetﷺ accorded them the status of human beings and ensured their rights as such. Heﷺ instructed people not to address them as "slaves" but as "brothers". Heﷺ said to his own slave, Hazrat Zayed (R.A), "You are my brother and friend." Heﷺ also instructed the slaves not to address their owners as "lord", but as "master", which means an elder.

Heﷺ arranged the marriage of freed slaves with the daughters of decent Arab families, though the Arabs formerly looked down upon them. There were many slave-companions like Hazrat Bilal (R.A), Suhaib (R.A), Hazrat Zayed (R.A), Abu Hind (R.A) to whom daughters of honourable families were married and those families considered it an honour for them. In some cases, heﷺ availed the right of inheritance to the slave from the master, and from the slave to the former master if the case so warranted. This was a clear recognition of the fact that both (master and slave) were taught to be friendly with each other.

4.2.2 Rights of Slaves

The Prophetﷺ framed a set of rights of slaves that were obligatory for their masters. Heﷺ said:

> *"Let them eat whatever you eat and wear whatever you wear"*.

The companions were so conscious of it that they obeyed this instruction in the letter and the spirit. The custom among the Arabs was that they would wear two sheets of the same colour, one for the upper

part of the body and the other for the lower part. Hazrat Abu Zar Ghaffari (R.A) treated his slave so well that if he had two sheets for himself, he would wear one and give the other to him.

It is reported about Hazrat Ali (R.A) that he went to the market with his slave and said to him, “Choose two pairs for both of us, one set coarse and the other set of fine fabric.” When the two sets were brought, he kept the coarse one for himself and gave the fine one to his slave. The slave protested and said that he had chosen the fine one for him (Hazrat Ali) but Hazrat Ali replied, “I am an old man, the coarse set is good enough for me. You are a young man. You should wear the fine set.” Gentlemen, this attitude of the Companions was due to the Prophet’sﷺ teaching.

If heﷺ got to know about anyone that he treated his slave badly, heﷺ would buy the slave to free him from the oppression of his master. People gave physical punishment to the slaves and chained them. Heﷺ hated this and instructed that they should not be hit on the face as it much more humiliating and is not permissible.

4.2.3 Progressive Elimination of Slavery

It is alleged that Islam continued the scourge of slavery for quite some time. To understand this, it is necessary to understand the historical context in which Islam had emerged. There were three options available for prisoners of war.

- First, they were made slaves and then bought and sold
- Second, to exchange the prisoners of war
- Third, to kill them

It is clear that the third option was a brutal one, and that is why the Prophetﷺ never followed it except in the battle of Banu Qareera (where the leader of Jews had decided to kill the Jew men).

To make slaves of the prisoners of war was the most pragmatic step in those circumstances, and the Prophetﷺ adopted it. Still, heﷺ gave them the status of human beings and granted them such rights that were

unthought-of before him. There was no pact between nations about war or prisoners of war. In those circumstances, there were no other options available. However, the Prophet ﷺ established such conventions that would gradually abolish slavery altogether. He ﷺ laid down the principle that:

> *"If a slave becomes the mother of the child of her master, she would no longer be considered slave and such children would be free citizens and would enjoy the same rights as the other children of their father".*

In the atonement that Islam has laid down for various sins, freeing the slave is uppermost. Atonement for not keeping fast (Saum), for swearing, for killing, etc., for all this, freeing a slave was considered the most effective compensation.

Moreover, the Prophet ﷺ declared such merit and rewards for freeing a slave that people showed eagerness to buy them and free them. Hazrat Ayesha (R.A) had freed forty slaves in atonement for a sin. It is reported that Hazrat hakim bin Khuzzam (R.A) had freed one hundred and Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar (R.A) had freed one thousand slaves. Hazrat Abdur Rahman bin Auf (R.A) was a rich Companion. It is reported that he freed three thousand slaves. The kind Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.A) freed a number of slaves. It is due to the teaching of the Prophet ﷺ, that the scourge of slavery that had been continuing for thousands of years was gradually abolished within one thousand years of Islam's emergence.

4.3 WORKERS

The second group of people that were the most oppressed were workers. They still are the most exploited. The lush green harvest that we see in the field is the result of the hard labour of these workers. But they continue to be exploited most cruelly. That is why the gulf between the industrialists and workers keeps increasing continuously.

4.3.1 Workers, in the Eyes of the Prophet ﷺ

The Prophet ﷺ gave honour to workers and made them feel that they were worthy members of the society. It is said in the Quran that Hazrat Musa, the great Prophet (PBUH), worked for Hazrat Shoaib (PBUH) for eight to ten years. The Prophet ﷺ said that almost all the Prophets were shepherds. He ﷺ further said that Allah likes such persons who know some skill and use it. He ﷺ also said that:

> *"To work for one's livelihood through legal income is better than conducting Jihad for one year".*
>
> *"The best halal income is that work in which one uses one's hands and legs and one's forehead gets drenched in sweat".*

On one occasion, he ﷺ kissed the rough-hewn hand of a worker to show his respect for him.

These were the ways in which he ﷺ tried to elevate the status of the workers in society and bring them a measure of self-respect.

4.3.2 Bonded Labour

These days bonded labour is a curse and efforts are being made to abolish it everywhere. Islam has no provision for such labour. From the Islamic point of view everyone is free to do any work or adopt any profession. No one can be compelled to remain attached to a particular and work for him. According to Islam, an employment is a contract between the employer and the employee that is done through mutual agreement.

4.3.2.1 Workers' Rights

The Prophet ﷺ has described the rights of the workers with great clarity. From one of his ﷺ statements it is clear that:

> *"The wages should be adequate for the worker to maintain his family".*

Islam also advocates that made beneficiaries of their labour so that wealth is properly distributed. A permissible means of this is the instruction that a man may work for an investor and share a pre – decided proportion of the profit. This is to discourage the tendency of making huge profits but giving the worker meagre wages. Heﷺ said that:

> *"The servant should be given a portion, however small, of the food he cooks".*

An interesting incident was narrated by the Prophetﷺ that pertained to the children of Israel and has been repeated by the famous Muhaddis (traditionist), Imam Bukhari in a number of places. The incident is as follows:

> *A worker left without taking his wages. After a long period, misfortune befell him and he remembered the wages that he had not taken. He came to his employer to make his claim. The employer said, "Take away the cattle that you see before you. All these are the result of your labour." The worker thought the employer was joking, but the employer reassured him that all those were indeed the result of his labour. Eventually, the worker took away whatever was given to him.*

I think there is a hint in this incident that the employer should give the workers the opportunity to have a share in the business and allow them to invest also so that they can also have a part of the profit.

The Prophetﷺ stressed that the wages should be clearly decided before the work begins. The instruction is that the worker should be paid his wages before the sweat of his brow dries. Heﷺ said:

> *"On the Day of Judgment, I shall be the enemy of three kinds of people: one kind is those who extract labour from the workers, but do not pay them proper wages..."*

Today, there is world-wide movement for the rights of workers and proper opportunities at the work place. It cannot be denied that the

principles of justice that the Prophetﷺ of Islam had laid down have their influence on this global movement.

4.4 THE SICK AND THE INFIRM

Among the weakest and the most disadvantaged groups are the sick and the infirm. There is no divine blessing compared to good health, and no ordeal more excruciating than disease. Nothing except human love and the fear of accountability on the Day of Judgment can compel a busy person to spend his time attending upon a sick person. That is why heﷺ placed a lot of stress on the care of the sick.

Heﷺ said that:

> *"A Muslim has five rights on another Muslim: one of them is attending upon the sick..."*

Heﷺ added:

> *"As long as a person remains busy attending upon a sick person, it is as though he is roaming in the garden of paradise".*

On one occasion heﷺ said:

> *"On the Day of Judgment, Allah will ask, 'Son of man, I was sick and you did not take care of me.' Human beings will ask: 'O Almighty, can You fall ill and require care?' Allah will say: 'If you had gone to attend upon that person, you would have found me there'."*

The Prophetﷺ has declared the care of the sick as a human duty. So, there is no distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim, young and old, rich or poor in this regard. Heﷺ attended upon Jews and infidels. He also discouraged people from leaving their place in case of an epidemic. This was for two reasons: first, people would carry the virus wherever they go; secondly, there would be no one left to look after those who had already fallen sick. The Quran has made special allowances for the sick (Noor: 61). It has made special mention of the blind and the lame exempting them from some responsibilities.

In some religions, disease is taken to be the consequence of sin. Among the Hindus the concept of reincarnation is prevalent. This concept implies that the sufferings of the present birth are the consequences of sin in earlier births. Such a concept robs human beings of any sympathy or fellow-feeling for the sick. On the contrary one despises him. Islam says that disease is a test from Allah. It is not necessary that only sinners fall sick. Good people also fall sick. Even prophets were not free from diseases. Rather, Allah subjects good people to more tests than sinners.

4.4.1 Value of the Human Life

The Prophet ﷺ regarded the human life as a gift from God. That is why he ﷺ has forbidden suicide and considered it a great sin. These days even some courts are inclined to permit suicide. But Islam has always protected the human life even before it comes into the world. It has forbidden abortion that was preferred on economic grounds. He ﷺ encouraged the growth of human population. The concept of population control from the economic point of view is not new. Such a concept was prevalent in Arabia before Islam. The Quran condemned this and exhorted people not to kill their children for fear of starvation. The idea behind family planning is that as the sources of food are limited, if population is allowed to increase uncontrollably, then it will not be possible to provide people even the basic necessities. But this apprehension has been proved false. If Malthus, the pioneer of family planning had been right, people of the world should have been starving now. But every sensible person can notice how people's food and drink, dresses, standard of living and means of communication have improved dramatically. This could not have been imagined, even 25 years back. Actually, as the population increases, resources also increase. The underground resources are also being explored.

Today, people have started resorting to killing, giving it fancy names. One such is called "mercy killing", i.e. if a patient is suffering from an incurable disease, he should be allowed to die by administering some medicine or injection. Islam does not permit this. There is no disease for which Allah has no cure. It is the job of doctors to invent such medicine

and not to kill people. In any case, Islam has forbidden suicide. This indicates the honour and respect Islam accords to human life.

4.4.2 Code of Conduct for Doctors

The Prophetﷺ formulated a code of conduct for doctors. Those who are not conversant with the treatment of disease and cause harm to the patients, will be accountable for the damage they inflict. Heﷺ has given utmost importance to the cure of diseases, to such an extent that things not permissible otherwise, are allowed if they are used in treatment.

Another important factor for the patient is secrecy. A patient may be suffering from a disease which he does not want others to know about. The instruction that heﷺ has given in the matter of scandal-mongering is valid in this case also. People who spread scandals expose the faults or inadequacies, physical, moral, intellectual of others. This is illegal, and heﷺ has strictly forbidden it. This indicates that doctors also should not expose the secrets of their patients that they do not want to make public. But, if it is necessary to save someone from cheating or any other harm, it can be done. Heﷺ himself revealed the inadequacy of such a person on the occasion of marriage. This is how Islam maintains balance and moderation.

4.5 ORPHANS

Before the birth of our Prophetﷺ, his father had died. When heﷺ was only four years old, his mother had left this world. Probably, Allah wished that heﷺ should be brought up under His own supervision. When the Prophetﷺ began to understand things, heﷺ found himself an orphan. Heﷺ fully experienced the deprivation and suffering of orphan hood and the social injustice that accompanied it.

In the Arab society, orphans were treated most abominably. They were disinherited from property. People would marry orphan girls by paying a meagre sum as dower and then ill-treat them. They would also often cheat orphans and treat them with contempt. The Quran has alluded to it. The Quran says:

That is he who repulses the orphan, (Ma'un:2)

The Prophetﷺ remedied this and removed injustice to the orphans.

4.5.1 Declarations of the Prophetﷺ Regarding Orphans

The Prophetﷺ said:

> *"The best house is that where an orphan is brought up and is treated well. And the worst house is that where an orphan is ill-treated."*

On another occasion heﷺ said:

> *"The person who loves an orphan and I will be so close to each other in paradise as the two closest fingers".*

People consider an orphan as a burden on them, which is wrong of them.

> *"Because of such weak and helpless people, Allah provides you with provisions. You do not feed them; on the contrary, they feed you."*

4.5.2 Impact of the Prophet'sﷺ Teaching on Muslims

It was the impact of the Prophet'sﷺ teachings that the Companions began to treat orphans with great affection. Hazrat Umar bin Abdullah (R.A) showed such concern for them that he would not have his meals without orphans. A case was brought before the Prophetﷺ regarding an orchard to which an orphan made a claim. He could not prove his case and it was decided against him. The orphan began to cry. Heﷺ was moved and requested the other party to give up his claim in favour of the orphan but he did not agree. Hazart Abu Alad Huddah (R.A) was present there. He gifted his own orchard to the orphan. The Prophetﷺ himself brought up many orphans. When heﷺ married Umme Salma, several orphans came along with her. Heﷺ gave them such affection that they never felt that they were orphans.

In the Islamic Shariah, looking after the property of orphans is one of the duties of the Qazi. It happened only after the advent of Islam that endowments were made for orphans and orphanages were established.

Even today one can find the largest number of orphanages established by Muslims who are also more concerned than any other community to safe guard their rights.

CHAPTER 5
THE PROPHETﷺ OF ISLAM
AND MERCY TOWARDS ANIMAL KINGDOM

Fourth Address-Part II

[6th Zillhijja, 1417H: 14th April 1997]

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Hazrat Muhammadﷺ was not only a blessing to human beings but animals too. Just as heﷺ was kind to human beings, heﷺ was also kind to dumb beasts. Human beings often tend to be very cruel to animals, forgetting the fact that the animals cannot resist this cruelty. Before the advent of Islam, animals were a source of livelihood for the Arabs. Milk was a rich source of food. Animals were the means of travel and carrying goods. Trade and commerce depended on animals. Despite all this, people's attitude towards animals was very cruel.

5.2 INSTRUCTIONS TO BE KIND TO ANIMALS

The Prophetﷺ has forbidden such cruelty. Heﷺ has forbidden hitting animals on the face. People set animals to fight and watched it with delight. Heﷺ discouraged this. Heﷺ instructed that people provide animals with sufficient fodder. When heﷺ saw a famished camel heﷺ instructed people to fear Allah and take care of it. A miracle also took place in this context. A camel complained against its owner. One should not consider such things impossible. The notion of possible and impossible is relevant only for the creation (human beings). For the Creator of the universe, nothing is impossible.

Heﷺ instructed people that:

> *"If they travelled in the verdant season, they should drive slowly so that the animals can take advantage of it. And during famine, they should drive fast"*.

The Prophet ﷺ also instructed men to use animals for the task they are meant for. He forbade their use as a pulpit, standing on which people made speeches.

He ﷺ said:

"A man was riding a bull when it turned to him and said, "I'm not meant for this job."

He ﷺ further said:

"People's reward or punishment in the Hereafter will also depend on their treatment of animals".

"On the Day of Judgment, a woman will be sent to hell merely because she kept a cat tied all the time and did not allow it to roam freely and gather food".

"A person will go to heaven only because he gave water to a thirsty dog".

He ﷺ also said that if animals stray in the harvest field and eat the crop, the owner will get the reward of virtue for it.

5.2.1 Killing Animals Unnecessarily

Though Islam permits meat-eating, it is not proper to kill animals unnecessarily.

"A man had caught a sparrow and its mother was restless. The Prophet ﷺ showed his displeasure at this and said that one will be accountable even if one kills a sparrow unnecessarily".

He ﷺ has forbidden the killing of any creature of which we do not make any use, like ants, bees and so on. Similarly, he ﷺ has strictly forbidden the burning of any living creature. Once, during a journey, people had to set up an oven at a spot that was full of ant holes. He ﷺ instructed them to put out the fire.

The Quran tells us about a Prophet (PBUH) who had ordered the burning of ants and Allah punished him.

5.2.2 Slaughter – the Civilized Way

The Prophet ﷺ prescribed the proper way of slaughtering the animals whose meat is legal. Before the advent of Islam, there was no proper way of slaughtering animals. People killed them the way they liked. He ﷺ gave instructions that make the slaughter less painful to the animals; he ﷺ instructed people to use sharp knives and cut the jugular vein as swiftly as possible. Earlier, people used to kill animals by cutting them through teeth and nails. He ﷺ forbade cutting a particular part of a living animal, like the hump of a camel or the tail of sheep. He ﷺ prohibited such brutal ways and said that any severed part of a living animal will be treated as illegal.

Animals were also made the target of weapons. The prey was tied and it was hit with arrows etc. Finally, it would be eaten. Such an animal was called "Sabur" in Arabic. He ﷺ instructed that no living creature should be killed this way, and declared the meat of such an animal haram or illegal, so that people give up such a brutal method of slaughter.

5.3 MEAT EATING IN HINDUISM

Some people feel that by permitting the eating of meat, Islam has shown its cruelty to animals. Some of our non-Muslim brothers even equate Islam with meat-eating. Here, it should be noted that apart from Indian religions, all other religions of the world allow meat-eating. In fact, meat is regarded as one of the primal human food. Even in the Indian religions, except for Jainism, meat-eating was prevalent. These days it is publicized among the Hindus that meat is forbidden to them. This only indicates their lack of awareness of their past and their religion. In the Vedas, there is evidence of meat-eating and animal sacrifice. It is said in the Rig Veda:

> *"O Indra, let Pasan and Vishnu cook a hundred buffaloes for you" [Rig Veda 17:11:16].*

In the Yajur Veda, one finds indications of the sacrifice of horse, bull, barren cows and buffaloes to gods. It is said in Manusmriti:

"The deity remains satisfied for two months with the flesh of fish, three months with the flesh of deer, four months with the flesh of sheep and five months with the flesh of winged creatures" [Manusmritim Adhyay 3:268].

Gandhiji himself admitted that in the past, animal sacrifices and meat-eating were prevalent among the Hindus. According to Tara Chand, animals were sacrificed in many Vedic rituals.

There is a consensus among religions about meat being an important human food. Nature and common sense also indicate that it should be so.

5.3.1 Demand of Nature

Those who forbid meat-eating do so because they consider killing of any living creature a sin. I would state that it is a law of nature that inferior creatures are the fodder for superior ones. Just think if it is possible to avoid this. When you drink a glass of water or milk, you swallow hundreds of bacteria. Then what is the function of the medicine you take? It kills the harmful bacteria that have grown inside you. Thus, you cannot even drink water or use medicine if you want to avoid killing living creatures.

Moreover, modern science has proved that plants have life as well. In Hindu philosophy also, it has been accepted that plants have life. While discussing're-incarnation', Swami Dayanand Saraswati commented that:

"The soul can be reincarnated in men, animals or plants".

This is an open admission that plants have life. So, if one wants to avoid killing of living creatures, he will have to avoid food made from plants. Thus, it is impossible for anyone to live without killing other creatures.

5.3.2 The Economic Point of View

A large part of the human need for food is supplied by animals. There are some places that are too cold or too hot where no crop can be grown

and meat serves as the only human food. Then, there may be some deficiencies in the human body that can be supplied only by meat. Besides, after reaching a certain age, animals outlive their utility. They do not give milk, nor can they do any work. At this stage, if peasants are not allowed to slaughter them for food, they will become a burden to them. The poor peasants who cannot fill their own stomach will find it difficult to look after them.

Some people say that they do not object to cow-slaughter from the religious point of angle. It is a social necessity. If these animals are not slaughtered, then people can be provided with milk and ghee at a cheaper price. This is a misapprehension. The fact is in the countries where far more animals are slaughtered than in India, you can have milk and ghee at a much cheaper rate than in India. One can point to Europe and America as examples. Despite the ban on slaughter at several places, milk and ghee are scarce in India.

The reality is that many of the developed countries of the world are growing animals and exporting meat to other countries thus earning huge agricultural profit. If animal slaughter is banned in India, the country will lose a huge amount that it earns by exporting meat, skin etc.

5.3.3 Does Meat eating make Men Violent?

Some people think that meat-eating makes man violent and has a negative influence on his personality. But the history of the world and the recent history of our country contradict this. In India many communal riots have taken place. In Meerut and Bhagalpur, the people who perpetrated violence and the naked dance of death, were mainly vegetarians who were opposed to meat-eating. Among the world leaders, Gautama Buddha and Jesus Christ are considered the apostles of non- violence. Did they not eat meat? They were all meat eaters. In fact, Gautama Buddha died just after eating meat. As opposed to this, Hitler was the most ruthlessly violent man on earth. But he was a vegetarian and not a meat-eater. Thus, it is silly to think that violence or

non-violence in human beings depends merely on food. As long as the hearts do not change and man does not learn to fear God and love humanity, mere food habits cannot change people's taste and temperament.

5.4 CONCLUDING WORDS

Brothers, there is a lesson for humanity here that we should not merely think of ourselves. Humanity has claims on us. We must rise in support especially of the oppressed, and try to get them justice and spread the message of Islam to humanity. Our responsibility is greater in our own country, India, where a large section of people are deprived of social and economic justice. May Allah give us the ability to carry out our responsibilities, Ameen!

5.5 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

5.5.1 Killing serpents and other harmful creatures

Q: You said that we should not kill serpents and other creatures. Can't we kill those animals that cause damage to human beings?

A: My remark was not meant for harmful or ferocious creatures. It is not permissible to kill them unnecessarily. The animals that pose a danger to human beings may be killed.

5.5.2 Trapping Birds

Q: How about keeping birds caged for decorative purpose?

A: It is not desirable to keep birds in cages merely for decoration, as this amount to oppression. When the Prophetﷺ saw a man keeping a bird in his hand while its parents flew restlessly, he expressed disapproval.

5.5.3 Why Cut only Half the Throat?

Q: Why is only half the throat cut while slaughtering cattle? What is the rationale?

A: The instruction is that one should cut half the throat in such a manner that veins for breath, food, and the two main blood veins are cut so that

the creature is killed quickly and suffers the least pain. If one goes further and slashes the back side of the throat, it will mean inflicting more pain on the creature.

5.5.4 Using Chemicals to Kill Mosquitoes, Flies

Q: If mosquitoes and flies are not burnt, they will go on increasing. Can we use some chemicals then?

A: What I meant was that punishment by burning is the sole prerogative of Allah. However, to adopt other means like use of chemicals to get rid of harmful insects is permissible.

5.5.5 Medical Experiments on Living Creatures

Q: What is the view of Islam on the experiments that are carried out on dead or living animals?

A: The Islamic view is that the whole universe has been created for the benefit of human beings. It is permissible to use any object in it for a rightful cause. For instance, food is an essential necessity. Similarly, medicine is an even greater necessity for human beings. So using animals for medical experiments is permissible.

5.5.6 Cutting the Tail of a Living Sheep

Q: Can one cut the lump of flesh on the tail of a living sheep?

A: It is very painful to the sheep. The Arabs did this before the advent of Islam. They particularly cut the hump of the camel and ate it. The Prophetﷺ has forbidden this brutal custom. It is not permissible to cut the flesh from the tail of sheep. It will be treated as haram like the flesh of a dead animal.

5.5.7 How are Dogs to be Treated?

Q: How are dogs to be treated? We have heard that angels do not come where dogs walk.

A: Dogs are also Allah's creation. Hence, it is not permissible to torture them or kill them without reason. The Prophetﷺ had instructed that they

should be killed in the beginning, but later prohibited it. However, if they pose a danger, as happens with mad dogs, then they can be killed. It is permitted to keep dogs in the house for the purpose of security. But to rear them in the house and keep them close without any use is not proper from the Islamic as well as the medical point of view.

5.5.8 Instructions about Parrots and other Birds

Q: Please tell us about rearing parrots and other birds and selling them.

A: It is not proper to keep the birds imprisoned in a cage. If they become so familiar that they can stay without being caged, then there is no problem, for instance, pigeons etc. Once you are the owner, you can sell them and others can buy them, as in the eye of the Shariah they become one's property that can be disposed of by its owner. According to the Shariah, there are two conditions for the buying and selling of an object. First, it should be designated as property, and second, it should be in the possession of the owner.

CHAPTER 6
THE PROPHET ﷺ OF ISLAM
AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS

Fifth Address

[7th Zillhijja, 1417H: 15th April 1997]

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Respected gentlemen, I am going to deliver the last address in the series today. The topic, in a way, contains the soul of other addresses. It deals with the fundamental rights that Islam has bestowed on men and how the Prophet's ﷺ blessing encompasses all aspects of human life.

6.2 THE PRESENT PROBLEM OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The problem of fundamental human rights is an important international issue today. Human history may not have experienced the damage and destruction inflicted on men in the World War I and II. The vanquished in these wars became a plaything in the hands of the victors and they were treated so ignominiously that even the devil would have been put to shame by it. Finally, the General Assembly of United Nations Organization (U.N.O) passed a charter in December 1948, on the subject of fundamental human rights, which consists of 34 articles. Amendments have been made in it from time to time. The charter is regarded as an important document for the protection of human rights. The western nations that were involved in the destruction due to the world wars can be found to be involved in the clashes anywhere in the world. By passing the charter they have taken the credit of being the protectors of human rights, but they continue to be the merchants of destruction as they sell and supply arms to the less developed nations of the world.

6.2.1 Importance of the Prophet's ﷺ Last Address

From the angle of basic human rights, if we look at the Prophet's ﷺ last address, we find that this historic speech encompasses almost all the

issues of human rights in a cryptic form. In my presentation today, I will try to highlight some of the points raised in his ﷺ historic address that would underline their importance in the protection of human rights.

6.2.2 Declaration of Human Dignity

Gentlemen, it is remarkable that he ﷺ recognized the dignity of human beings as human beings without any distinction of colour, creed, place, tongue, etc. Allah says:

> *We have honoured the Children of Adam, and We have carried them on land and sea, and have provided them with sustenance good and pure, and have preferred them above many of those whom We have created with a marked preferment [Bani Israel:-70].*

Men refer to the sun and the moon as examples of beautiful objects use the rose and the pearl as symbols of beauty. They like the eyes of a doe and are tempted by narcissus. All this indicates the inadequacy of their thought. The miracle of creation is human being. There can be no other structure as aesthetically elegant as that of the human body. Allah says:

> *We have indeed created man in the best of moulds [Teen : 4].*

6.2.2.1 Tawheed: a Proof of Human Dignity

The greatest indicator of human dignity is the unity /oneness of Allah. On one hand it impels men towards Allah, and on the other hand, it makes them free from the domination of Allah's creations. They do not have to bow before anyone except Allah. Thus, oneness of Allah is the greatest honour for men; and polytheism amounts to humiliation for men. In the eye of Islam, man is the finest and noblest of Allah's creations. The sun, the moon, the most glorious mountains cannot compare with the dignity of human beings. That is why their heads cannot bow before anyone except their Creator. This is the result of the efforts of the Prophet ﷺ who has saved men from indignity and humiliation.

6.3 HONOUR FOR HUMANITY

The Prophet ﷺ was so conscious about human honour that it extended to the dead as well. What causes pain to a living person is prohibited in case of the corpse too. He ﷺ instructed that the corpse should be given a bath with honour, be dressed in a clean shroud and be scented. Then Salah should be performed in its honour. After that, people should carry it on their shoulders to the graveyard and bury it with the greatest honour. Whether the dead is a Muslim or non-Muslim, he should be respected. Once when the corpse of a non-Muslim was being carried, the Prophet ﷺ got up in respect. People told him that he was a non-Muslim, but he ﷺ said: “So what? He is a human being.”

During war, the Arabs used to treat their enemies abominably. They would chop off parts of the body, make garlands with human skulls and take drink in them. His ﷺ own uncle Hazrat Hamza was treated similarly after the battle of Uhud. This is called “Masla” in Arabic. He ﷺ banned it. Women used to add others’ hair to their own to make it longer. He ﷺ forbade it and said that it would invite Allah’s Wrath. This indicates that it is not permitted for one human being to use a part of another’s body, because it goes against the principle of human dignity and honour. Following this principle, the Islamic jurists have stipulated that any part of the human body should not be subjected to maltreatment as it amounts to dishonouring human beings.

6.3.1 Personal Honour and Decency

Gentlemen, every human being loves his honour and self-respect. He ﷺ set great store by people’s self-respect and status in society. He ﷺ wrote a letter to Heraclius, the emperor of Rome and addressed him as:

> *“The Greatest Roman”. The Companions had reservations about this, to which he ﷺ said: “There is nothing wrong in this because his people address him as such.”*

In the same letter, he ﷺ used the word “ان تتولوا” (If you remain indifferent to Islam), instead of “كفر” (dis-believe) that meant you will

be responsible for their sin." Even here, one can see an instance of good and decent behaviour with Heraclius, as the word "dis-believe" would have sounded too severe for him. He ﷺ instructed:

> *"Whenever you go to someone's house, allow the master of the house to be the Imam. And when you visit someone at his home or office, avoid sitting in the place where he sits which may be a symbol of his status".*

He further advised people not to treat anyone with contempt.

> *Let not some men among you laugh at others: It may be that the (latter) are better Than the (former)[Hujrat :11]-*

The punishment that the Shariah prescribes for adultery is indicative of the high premium Islam puts on decency and self-respect. For character assassination, Islam prescribes 80 lashes, so that no one dares to defame another. A drunkard neither cares for anyone's honour nor can avoid defaming others. That is why he ﷺ not only condemned drinking, but cursed the sellers, buyers and carriers of liquor. He ﷺ prescribed severe punishment for them. In some traditions, the prescription is 40 lashes, in some others, it is 80 lashes. That is why some jurists have prescribed 40 lashes and some 80.

It was the result of his ﷺ teachings, that the Companions who were trained by him, and especially the Caliphs, adhered to this. Even the high and mighty was not allowed to plat with the self-respect of an ordinary person. During a horse race, Mohammad, a son of Umaro bin Aas, governor of Egypt, slapped an Egyptian. The case was brought before Hazrat Umaro who allowed the obscure Egyptian to beat the governor's son. He was told to serve a few lashes to Hazrat Umaro too because it was due to his position that Mohammad dared to do this, though the Egyptian did not do it as Hazrat Umaro was not directly responsible.

Hazrat Musa Ashari was the governor of Kufa during Hazrat Umar Faruq's caliphate. When a man demanded more booty than his share, he

got angry and gave him 20 lashes. When the case was brought before Hazrat Umar (R.A), he served lashes to Abu Musa without caring for his position. Besides highlighting Hazrat Umar's sense of justice, the incident underlines how protectively the Prophet ﷺ and his followers guarded the self-respect of even ordinary citizens.

6.3.2 Protection of Privacy

An important need of human beings is the protection of their privacy. No interference in personal life is what everyone wants; and that one's personal affairs should not be made public. The Prophet ﷺ took great care of this. He discouraged unhealthy curiosity and peeping into others' houses. He said that peeping into a house is like entering the house. The instruction given was that pebbles be thrown at the person who peep's into others' houses. Allah says that we should not enter another's house without permission:

> *Enter not houses other than Your own, until you have Asked permission and saluted Those in them [Al-Noor:27]*

The above verse reminds of an incident related to Hazrat Umar (R.A). During his caliphate, one day he was walking in the streets of Madinah to see the condition of his subjects and know about their needs. Hearing some sound from inside a house he went towards it. From a hole in the wall he saw that a man from Banu Umaiyya was drinking and his slave-girl was dancing. Hazrat Umar got angry and leaped into the house and said angrily: "You drink and listen to music!"

The man knew Hazrat Umar's temperament and replied: "Amirul Momineen (leader of the believers), please allow me to have my say. I have committed two sins – drinking and listening to songs. But you have violated three of Allah's instructions. Allah's instruction is that one should not enter into another's house without permission; but you entered my house; the divine instruction is that you should greet the person before entering his house, but you didn't do it and thirdly, Allah has instructed us not to be inquisitive; but you were inquisitive.

Hazrat Umar (R.A) forgave that person, and it had such an impact on him that he repented. This incident demonstrates how much importance Islam accords to people's personal lives. Even the caliph was not in a position this principle without valid reason.

6.3.3 Equality

Among the basic rights, the right to equality between man and man is the most important one. The principle of equality practiced by Islam in the social, political and religious spheres, has dealt a severe blow to social hierarchy and inequality practiced in all societies. No other religion can be compared with Islam in this regard. Despite condemning dynastic rule and preaching democracy, many countries in the East and the West still practice inequality. Some people say that Muslims are also not free from caste and class consciousness. But there is a difference between Muslims and other communities. Among the Hindus, caste delusion is a matter of religious belief sanctioned by important religious texts. Among those who believe in the Bible, making distinctions between Christians and non- Christians has religious dimensions. The tension between the whites and the blacks in the West probably underlines the fact that blacks cannot be regarded as true blue Christians. In Islam there is no basis for any distinction on the basis of race, colour or class. If such sick thinking is found among the Muslims in any area, it is due to mingling with people of other faiths and it is a social evil. It is easier to redress social evils and evils of tradition and custom, rather than those evils that have religious sanction.

During the Caliphate of Hazrat Umar (R.A) a rich Christian named Ihsan had embraced Islam. Though he had embraced Islam he was not yet acquainted with the Islamic temperament. During circumambulation his fine dress was trampled by a common Arab. He was furious and slapped the person. When the case was brought before the Caliph's court, Hazrat Umar (R.A) gave the verdict that the ordinary Arab would take revenge or he must forgive the rich man. The vanity of the rich man was not ready to accept the verdict. He prayed for two days' time, ran away and gave up Islam. Hazrat Umar (R.A) felt no misgiving at the

loss of a rich man but thanked Allah for the ability to stand steadfast on the path of Islam.

People today talk a lot about democracy and justice, but is there really one standard of justice for the mighty and the poor? Are they equally assured of justice? It is difficult to answer these questions in the affirmative. Our country is considered as the largest democracy in the world and rightfully so. But are the means of justice the same? Absolutely not! But the laws given by the Prophet ﷺ and the examples set by his friends leave one in no doubt about the principle of equality practiced in Islam. In these laws there is no discrimination between Mahmood and Ayaz, the master and the slave. Hazrat Umar (R.A) had publicly reprimanded several governors, and in an important case, filed a public suit against his own governor, Hazrat Mughira bin Shuba (R.A).

6.4 SECURITY OF LIFE

The Prophet ﷺ has given utmost importance to protection and preservation of human life. The Quran has strictly forbidden the unlawful killing of any human being. The Quran says:

> *Nor take lie, which Allah has made Sacred – except for just cause [Bani Israel:33]*

The Quran has equated the killing of one man with the killing of humanity. When one has no respect for human life, then killing one person or a whole community is all the same to him.

> *If anyone slew a person –unless it be for murder or for spreading Mischief in the land – it would be as if He slew the whole people (for ever)[Maida:32]*

Islam has sought to protect not only those who have already come into the world, but also those who are still in the mother's womb. Allah says:

> *Kill not your children for fear of want [Bani Israel: 31]*

The jurists agree that after life comes into being, i.e. after 120 days of pregnancy, abortion is illegal. And within this period, abortion is not permissible without a valid reason. The concept of family planning has increased the rate of abortion alarmingly. It is shameful from the moral standpoint.

Similarly, Islam has not permitted suicide and has called it illegal. As regards the honour of human life, no distinction has been made between Muslim and non-Muslim. Killing anyone is haram. The Quran has forbidden the killing of any human being without making distinction between Muslim and non- Muslim. The Prophetﷺ said:

> *"Whoever kills a non-Muslim who had entered into a contract with Muslims for mutual co-existence, will remain deprived of the scent of paradise, though this scent can be had from a distance that can be covered in forty years."*

6.5 FREED MAN FROM THE BURDEN OF OTHER'S SINS

Among the Christians, there is the concept of "atonement" for the original sin. It means that the sin committed by Adam and Eve has to be expiated from generation to generation. In other words, the sin of parents was visited on children. Contrary to this, the Prophetﷺ gave the concept that every person is responsible for his own actions, and free from the burden of other's sins. Any person might be close to you but you cannot be held accountable for his actions. Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab were the worst enemies of Islam who inflicted all kinds of pain on the Prophetﷺ. But when Akrama bin Abu Jahl and Durra bin Abu Lahab embraced Islam, the Prophetﷺ did not show any bitterness but welcomed them into the fold of Islam.

Even those who committed crimes but later repented were treated with respect by the Prophetﷺ. Wahshi was the killer of Hazrat Hamza (R.A), the Prophet's uncle. The abominable way Hazrat Hamza (R.A) was treated, must have hurt the Prophetﷺ deeply. But heﷺ did not show any ill-will towards Wahshi when he embraced Islam. Similarly, heﷺ did

not even look critically at Hinda, at whose instance Hazrat Hamza's body was dismembered. On the contrary, after the victory of Makkah, he ﷺ declared that whoever took refuge in Hinda's house was safe.

6.6 FREEDOM TO EXPRESS ONE'S OPINION

Man's distinction lies in his capability to think and decide for himself. It is in man's nature that he wants to express his opinion. The Prophet ﷺ not only recognized this but considered it essential on the occasions to express one's views. It is because of this that apart from divine revelations, the Companions expressed their opinions on all other issues, and even disagreed with the Prophet ﷺ while showing due respect to him ﷺ. On the occasion of the battle of Uhad, the Prophet ﷺ sought suggestion about the position from which to conduct the battle. He ﷺ felt that it was advisable to conduct it from Madina, while the young and spirited Companions opined that they should go out and engage the enemy. Not only he ﷺ agreed with it, but also gave precedence to their opinion.

Hazrat Barira (R.A) was the slave of Hazrat Ayesha (R.A) whom she had freed from slavery. During her period of slavery, Hazrat Barira was married to Hazrat Mughis. According to the Islamic law, after being freed from slavery, the slave had the right to honour or annul the marriage. Hazrat Barira (R.A) exercised this right. Hazrat Mughis loved Hazrat Barira deeply and wished that the marriage should continue. When the Prophet ﷺ spoke to Hazrat Barira on behalf of Hazrat Mughis, she asked the Prophet ﷺ: "Is it your recommendation or command?" The Prophet ﷺ said: "It is my recommendation." Hazrat Barira expressed her inability and he ﷺ did not feel bad about it.

There is always scope for different opinions in administrative matters. Even in the commands of Shariah, the Prophet ﷺ has allowed 'Ijtihad', i.e. innovation. He ﷺ said that even if there is some error in Ijtihad, it is still useful. There is a weak tradition of the Prophet ﷺ in this regard that "even the disagreement of my Ummat is a cause for blessing." Scholars

have practical knowledge of it. Sometimes the disagreement between scholars and jurists paves the way for a solution of men's problems.

The tradition of free expression that the Prophet ﷺ established led to greater catholicity among his followers. Hazrat Abu Zar Ghaffari's opinion was that one should possess just enough for a day. To possess more than that amounted to "hoarding", that was forbidden by the Quran. The majority of scholars disagreed with this view. The Caliph of the time, Hazrat Usman (R.A) disagreed too. Despite this, no one could stop Hazrat Abu Zar from declaring this fatwa.

Several battles were fought between Hazrat Ali (R.A) and the Khwarijis. The Khwarijis treated the Companion as dis-believers. But Hazrat Ali stopped short of declaring them so. He used to say that as long as they (Khwariji) did not declare war, they should be ignored. Caliph Haroon Al-Rashid expressed the wish to Imam Malik that he would hang the Imam's book from the Ka'ba and compels people to adhere to the principle laid down in this book. Imam Malik did not like this autocratic view and exhorted that the door of dissent must always remain open.

6.6.1 Right to Criticize and Protest

Freedom of opinion is also related to the right to criticize and protest. The Prophet ﷺ has not only allowed constructive criticism, but also encouraged it. He ﷺ said that to say the truth on the face of an autocratic ruler is the best form of Jihad. In the Quran and Ahadith this constructive criticism is known as "Nahi Anil Munkar" and it has been declared as one of the duties of Muslims. The Prophet ﷺ had once said:

> *"Help your brother whether he is the oppressor or the oppressed."*

The Companions said: "You have always asked us to help the oppressed, why the oppressor?" The Prophet ﷺ replied:

> *"Stop the oppressor from oppression"*.

This is the way you can help him.” The Prophetﷺ had trained the Companions in such a way that if they did not understand any of his instructions, they would stop him to get an explanation.

When a lender demands something from the person to whom he has lent it, he sometimes tends to be harsh. The Prophetﷺ not only advised his followers to bear with it but himself showed great patience on such occasions. A Jew had lent something to the Prophetﷺ which he demanded harshly. The Companions who were with himﷺ did not like it, but the Prophetﷺ said: “Don’t feel angry. He has the right to say so.” On the occasion of the Battle of Badr when heﷺ was organizing rows, Hazrat Sawad bin Ghazia was angry and demanded revenge. The Prophetﷺ presented himself and bared his belly. Sawad came forward and kissed hisﷺ belly with great love and affection saying, “This is my revenge.” Heﷺ had groomed the Companions in such a way that they had the generosity and confidence to face criticism and to call a spade a spade even before the most powerful authority. A lady, Hazrat Khaula (R.A) once met Caliph Hazrat Umar (R.A) on the way and began to advise him in the harshest words. The Caliph’s companions were stunned and tried to stop her. But the Caliph restrained them and heard the woman’s complaint with a smiling face.

He was once delivering an address when a man from the audience stood up and said:

> *“We will listen to you only when you explain how you are wearing two shawls while we are wearing only one.”*

Hazrat Umar pointed to his son and said that he would answer his question. When his son clarified that one of the shawls was his, the man said:

> *“Now you can go ahead with the address.”*

Can you think of such patience and justice in today’s world?

6.7 FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND BELIEF

Freedom of religion is related to freedom of conscience and opinion. The Quran has made it crystal clear that there is no scope for compulsion or force in matters of religion. This is a transaction of heart and conscience.

Let there be no compulsion in religion [Baqarah : 256]

Addressing the Prophet, the Quran says:

"Your job is one of persuasion and invitation. You are not a policeman"

Therefore do thou remind for thou art one to remind. Thou art not one to manage their affairs.[Ghasiah: 21-22]

When heﷺ arrived in Madinah, there were three communities there – Muslims, Jews and some other infidels. Heﷺ instituted a pact among the three groups for mutual defence and co-existence, and the leader of each group was a signatory to it. Under this pact, each group was allowed to pursue its own religion.

The tradition of religious tolerance that the Prophetﷺ fostered had its imprint on Islamic history. Hazrat Umar (R.A) had a non-Muslim slave called Wasq. He (R.A) tried to persuade him again and again to embrace Islam so that he could be given an important position in the administration. But the slave refused and the Caliph did not put any pressure on him. Whenever the Prophetﷺ sent a military expedition, heﷺ instructed his people to spare religious personalities and places of worship from any kind of violence. During the Caliphate of Hazrat Umar (R.A), when Baitul Muqaddas was conquered, he performed Salah in a church, at the request of Christian's priests. He had apprehensions that Muslims might want to convert it into a masjid. To prevent it he got an official document. He avoided performing Salah in any other church, despite requests from priests, for fear that later they might be converted into masjids.

The Muslims also did not try to impose the Shariah regarding halal and haram on non-Muslims. From the Prophet's statements the jurist stipulated that for Muslims, pork and drinking are haram, but non-Muslims would be allowed to use them and buy or sell them. If a Muslim destroys the wine of a Muslim, he would not have to compensate for it, but if a Muslim destroys the wine of non-Muslims, then he would have to pay compensation for it. It is said in Hidaya, the famous Hanafi text book that if a community considers marrying mothers and sisters permissible according to its belief, they should be allowed to do so in a Muslim country and Muslims should not interfere with it. However, if both the parties approach the Muslim court for settling any dispute, the issue would be decided according to the Islamic Shariah. This kind of tolerance and catholicity was possible because of the valuable teachings of the Prophet.

6.7.1 Respect for Religious Leaders

As regards religious freedom, an important aspect is the respect of people for their religious leaders and the emotional attachment they feel for them. The Quran has laid down rules for it that the personalities revered or worshipped by other communities, even if they pertain to false beliefs, should not be abused [An-'aam: 108]. Moreover, the Prophetﷺ gave Muslims the concept that Allah has sent Prophets to all communities and all languages. In the Quran we can find references to only a few of them. This belief requires Muslims to take up a cautious approach about leaders of the religions. They think that the personality could have been Allah's Prophet in his own time and the people may have distorted his teachings later.

This is the reason why many Muslim scholars have felt that personalities like Gautam Buddha, Sri Krishna, Sri Ram and some other religious leaders of India could have been Prophets in their own times. Some principles attributed to them and the concept of godhood and the Hereafter that one finds make us believe that they could have been so. Just consider that Hazrat Masih (R.A) had come six hundred years before the Prophetﷺ. In this period of six hundred years people had

transformed this messenger of Allah into God's son and began to worship him. The Christian world was not content with anything lesser than this. If it is so, then one can only imagine what kind of distortions have occurred in the teachings of these personalities who had left the world thousands of years ago.

Gentlemen, through the Quran, Allah has described a special attribute of the Prophet ﷺ

As the "Musaddiq" (confirmer) of the Prophets who had come before him.

> *We sent Jesus the son of Mary, Confirming the Torah that had come before him [Maida:46]*

He ﷺ reconfirmed the coming of earlier Prophets. Particularly, those who had been consigned to oblivion. The Bible contains such insulting references for these Prophets who are the crown of creation that any faithful person feels ashamed of having sexual liaison with his own daughters. Similar charges were levelled against Hazrat Loot (A.S). Hazrat Haroon was said to be a cow-worshipper. The Jews slandered their own Prophet Hazrat Musa (A.S), and accused Yehooz son of Yaqoob of having sex with Tamar, his own daughter-in-law.

Through in the Quran Allah ensured the restoration of the past Prophets. The Prophet Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ commended these Prophets who were slandered most by the Israelites. He ﷺ said about Hazrat Musa (A.S) that on the Day of Judgment when people will regain their consciousness, they will see Hazrat Musa (R.A) clutching the column of Arsh (Allah's seat). About Yunus (A.S) he ﷺ said, "Don't say that I am better than Yunus." About Hazrat Yusuf (A.S) he ﷺ said, "He exercised such patience that it would have been difficult for me to do so." The Jews had concocted all kinds of stories about Hazrat Dawood (A.S) and Hazrat Sulaiman (A.S). He ﷺ rescued them from their slander. Hazrat Masih (R.A) has been made the son of God by the Christians. He ﷺ contradicted it strongly.

In sum, the Prophetﷺ rescued all the Prophets of the past from the miasma of false allegations and the slander levelled against them by Jews and restored them to their rightful status. This is why it is unthinkable for Muslims to slander the religious leaders of other communities and hurt the sentiments of the people belonging to other religions.

6.8 RIGHT TO JUSTICE

The Prophetﷺ gave everyone the right to justice on the same principle. In Madinah, heﷺ received complaints not only from Muslims, but also Jews, and sometimes disputes between Muslims and Jews. And every complaint got the assurance of justice from himﷺ. The Quran has laid down the basic principles of justice. But in human beings, there is a natural tendency to make distinctions between their own people and others, and between friends and strangers. Allah says that the evils prevalent in a society should not make you so prejudiced that you are unable to do justice and become partial.

> *And let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from Justice [Maida:8]*

Those who study the history of Islam objectively will recognize that the Muslims have practiced it in real life. During the Caliphate of Hazrat Ali, a case was brought to the Qazi's court by the Caliph himself, who presented his son Hazrat Hasan (R.A) and his slave, Qanbra as witnesses. The Qazi did not accept either of the witnesses saying that the son's evidence in favour of his father and the slave's evidence in favour of his master are not acceptable. Finally, the case was decided in favour of the Jews and against the Caliph. However, Allah transformed this apparent defeat into victory. The Jew was in the wrong. Seeing the sense of justice of the Muslims, he embraced Islam.

This lofty sense of justice was not limited to the period of Caliphate alone, but even in the period of decline and decadence this tradition of fairness and justice was seen ingrained in the Muslim leaders. In India also, the Muslim rulers set such examples of impartial justice, that to

deny them would be to deny a part of our history. All this was the result of the lofty examples set by the Prophetﷺ.

6.9 RIGHT TO PRACTICE ANY PROFESSION

Gentlemen, before the advent of Islam, some places had the concept that some professions are specific to some people. In India, the profession of a person depended on his caste which was followed from generation to generation. The Prophetﷺ imposed no such restrictions and every person was allowed to follow the profession of his choice and earn his livelihood. Anyone can follow any trade, take up any job. No one is forbidden to take up any profession; nor is one forbidden to leave one profession and adopt up another. But if one's profession is linked with the welfare of the common people, he should be fully equipped to handle it so that people do not suffer because of his inadequacy. In this regard the Prophetﷺ instructed that those who are not specialized in medicine should not practice the medical profession. If his treatment harms anyone, he will be responsible for it. However, this is not based on any distinction of race, colour, family, locale etc., but strictly merit. Merit as the criterion will benefit everyone.

6.10 RIGHT OF POSSESSION AND SPENDING

Right of possession is also regarded as one of the basic human rights. The Prophetﷺ has accorded every person the right to possess property, to protect it and to spend it. When heﷺ migrated to Madinah, the most important issue was that of the Prophet's masjid (Masjid-e-Nabwi) that had to be built on a particular piece of land ordained by Allah. This piece of land belonged to two brothers named Sahl and Suhail who were orphans. When the Prophetﷺ wished to buy this land and approached the orphans to put a price on it, they very humbly offered the land free of cost. But heﷺ did not agree to it and paid the price for the land. There are two underlying lessons in this: first, one should always offer the best of terms to orphans, and second, however sacred or important the motive or purpose for which the land is to be acquired, it has to be acquired in the right way from its owner. There is no provision to

acquire the land illegally or without the permission of its owner, even if it is to build a masjid, the noblest activity. The Prophet ﷺ through his example negated any such possibility. Thus, the jurists are unanimous that it is sinful to perform Salat on land acquired forcefully.

> *After the victory over Makkah, the battle of Hunain was on the anvil. The Prophet ﷺ wished to borrow some arms from Safwan bin Ummi. The Arabs were known for their fine linguistic points even at critical moments. Safwan said – "Probably you want to possess them by force? Well, the whole Makkah was at your feet that day. You could have disarmed your enemies and no one would have said anything." But he ﷺ answered benevolently – "I want to borrow them from you and I am responsible to return them to you." This indicates the regard the Prophet ﷺ had for the property of a vanquished, non-Muslim member of a minority.*

Moreover, stealing anything from anyone, without making any distinction of religion, was declared a grave sin. The Quran stipulated that such a person should have his hand chopped off. (Maida: 38). Further, he ﷺ gave such importance to the protection of property that if anyone laid down his life in protecting his property, he will be considered a martyr.

6.11 GIST OF MOHAMMAD'S ﷺ TEACHINGS

Gentlemen, in the past few days you have heard about different aspects of the Prophet's life. You have heard about his message and his teachings. If someone asks what is the gist of his life's teachings and his reformist efforts, the answer probably would be, as he ﷺ himself said in one of his addresses,

> *"You have just one God and you are all sons of the same father, Adam."*

Allah's Godhood and the unity of humanity are the salient features of his teachings. The oneness of Allah and oneness of humanity are actually interrelated. If a community that does not believe in the oneness

of Allah; that believes in some intermediaries between Allah and human beings, it is not possible for it to believe in the oneness of humanity and the equality of all human beings.

This sense of oneness of Allah and unity of humanity makes one aware of the greatness of human beings. The system of belief that makes one bow his head before mountains and trees, rivers and seas, stones and brutes, even insects and worms, cannot be based on the notion of the greatness and equality of human beings. Rather it consigns human beings to the level of the basest and most inferior creatures. Where there is no notion of the unity of human beings, there must be class distinctions and inequality. It is regrettable that Muslims who are messengers of the Prophet's message have not tried their best to spread this message to the humanity at large. The result is instead of being considered the rescuers of humanity Muslims are now seen as fundamentalist and terrorists. The need of the hour is that Muslims should discard their lethargy and try to spread the Prophet's message (the message of peace for the whole humanity which contains remedy for all evils) in the wide world.

6.11.1 A Revolutionary Personality

Gentlemen, along with becoming a Prophetﷺ of humanity, heﷺ was also a revolutionary personality. The world-view presented by him was strengthened by distilled wisdom and common sense so that it became acceptable to all humanity. It changed the way people thought, their world view and their notions of good and evil.

For example, the concept of "Tawheed" i.e. oneness of Allah which had been propagated by Prophets from Hazrat Adam (R.A) to Hazrat Masih (R.A). Their mission was to remove polytheism and give humanity the idea of "Tawheed". But before Muhammadﷺ, it was "Polytheism" that predominated. Even those communities that were believers in the idea of "Tawheed" gradually accepted polytheism in their belief system. Who does not that Jainism and Buddhism in India and Christianity among the Israelites had, in fact, begun with the concept of "Tawheed".

Rather, these religions had come to put an end to Polytheism. Even in the Vedas and the Gita, there are verses that present the idea of Tawheed. But slowly, all these religions accepted influences from believers in polytheism and thus were deprived of Tawheed.

However, after the Prophethood of Muhammadﷺ, when Tawheed became dominant over polytheism, heﷺ injected such energy into it, that it became the dominant concept for all times. Even those religions that are based on polytheism began to look for elements of Tawheed within them. The Hindu religion has created thousands of gods, but because of the impact of Islam, a group within Hinduism emerged that began to oppose idol worship. Immediately after Hazrat Masih (R.A), Christianity reached the imperial palace of Greece. As the concept of trinity had already existed in Greece, Christianity severed its relationship with Tawheed and slowly embraced the concept of trinity where God, Christ and the Holy Ghost shared Godhead. After this, Christianity never let go of this new found concept. But probably it is the influence of Mohammads'ﷺ Prophethood that in Christianity also, voices of protest were raised and the group called Protestants emerged that oppose the traditional Christianity.

In this context' I also want to refer to democracy. Before the advent of Islam, kingship was the main form of rule in the whole world. Great empires like those of Iran and Rome flanked Arabia. Kingship was prevalent everywhere. Because of this, people had strange notions about kings and kingship. People of Iran regarded the king's family as divine people. At several places in India, people began their day in the morning only after a 'Darshan' (sight) of the king.

Islam removed the concept of dynastic kingship and gave the concept of caliphate which means that people should choose their representatives on the basis of merit. No one can claim to be the ruler merely on the basis of birth. The concept of caliphate heralded the concept of democracy, (though democracy as practiced today has many inadequacies.) The greatest drawback of democracy as practiced today is that it gives precedence to quantity over quality. However, its merits

like freedom of thought, accountability to people, right to criticize, public rather than individual rule – all these are to a great extent, the result of the concept of caliphate. Even before Islam, people had imagined such a concept and some Greek rulers had written books on it, but it was a mere concept that was available only in the pages of books. It was because of the Prophet's ﷺ teachings that this concept was given a bodily form and it became a dominant thinking in the world. Kingship either became an ideal or a word of abuse. For a ruler of today, the greatest demerit is to be designated an autocrat or dictator.

We mentioned the above two to serve merely as examples. Otherwise the Prophet's ﷺ valuable life and teachings contain many such examples.

Just reflect on the kind of revolution that came through him ﷺ in the social, cultural and political life of the people in his own lifetime. What great changes took place in what a short time! His message spread in the entire Arabian Peninsula and not a single house was deprived of the light he ﷺ brought. His light illumined the darkest part of the world. The period of his ﷺ preaching works out to 8156 days at the most and according to this count 274 square miles of area per day received his ﷺ message. This message brought such a profound change in people's thought and their way of life that within a short period of 15 years after his ﷺ death Islam spread in the three main continents of the time, i.e. Asia, Africa and Europe. Not only that this vast tract of land came under Muslim rule, but Islam won the hearts and minds of the people of those lands. Darkness was replaced by the light of true faith (Iman). We need to reflect where and how that revolutionary strength has been robbed from us. Why doesn't divine help come to us anymore and why can't we triumph over evil powers?

6.12 A WORD OF GRATITUDE

I am extremely thankful to the Muslim brothers in Bangalore who gave a humble person like me, the opportunity to talk on a grand subject like the life of the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ. This city is known for its orchards, parks and gardens. However, when a faithful sets foot here, he

feels akin to the martyrs and mystics who consolidated Islam in this last outpost and wrote a glorious history of Islam with their commitment and dedication.

The addresses presented before you would appeal more to the mind than the heart; more to the intellect than emotion. You must have realized that these addresses are free from the tumultuous ups and downs of rhetoric that sweeps away people because of their emotional impact. Despite this, all of you – brothers, sisters, friends and well-wishers - heard them with complete attention and attended them in large numbers. After each address you gave evidence of your interest through your thought provoking questions. I am extremely grateful to all scholars, intellectuals, men and women who came to listen to me. I was honoured by their presence. I am also thankful to the newspapers and magazines of Bangalore who gave full coverage of the addresses and spread the gist of the addresses in their pages. I am especially thankful to the officials and friends of the Institute of Objective Studies, who have instituted this series of addresses, and I pray to Allah for its continuance, for making it more and more beneficial to Muslims, and to enable all of us to follow Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ as our ideal.